



THE INDEPENDENT

No 3,670

THURSDAY 23 JULY 1998

(1850p) 45p

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Rose opens his account

BY FRAN ABRAMS
Chief Political Correspondent

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EDUCATION

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16-PAGE SUPPLEMENT

Brown acts to curb fat cat salaries

BY FRAN ABRAMS
Chief Political Correspondent

GAS AND electricity bills could be capped by ministers in an attempt to prevent directors of privatised utilities awarding themselves huge pay rises. Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, is considering two plans to make enormous salary increases for "fat-cat bosses" a thing of the past.

As the proposals were being considered, Downing Street issued its own warning yesterday to the whole of the private sector that lavish bonuses and rises well above the level of inflation were no longer acceptable.

One option being considered to keep utility bosses' pay down is new powers for regulators to intervene and cut the price of gas, electricity and water if they think directors are awarding themselves unreasonable pay rises. These cuts would be imposed on the basis that if directors could afford to put their salaries up, they could also afford to reduce prices.

Alternatively, shareholders could be given powers of veto over directors' salaries. Institutions which hold large blocks of shares - and have often failed to take an active interest in the running of the companies - could be forced to vote on the issue.

In a Green Paper published earlier this year, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) said it wanted to ensure that all utility companies adopted best practice in setting boardroom pay.

The Government is attached, in principle, to ensuring a closer link between directors' remuneration and the achievement of rigorous customer service standards, particularly for companies operating in monopoly and pre-competitive markets," the paper said.

Responses to the exercise are now in and ministers are

FOUR OF THE FATTEST CATS

Cedric Brown, the former chairman of British Gas, saw his salary rise by 75 per cent in 1994, to £475,000. With a pension package worth £5.5m he could expect to receive £316,000 a year in retirement.

Kevin Bond, the chief executive of Yorkshire Water, recently received an extra £55,000 on top of a basic salary of £185,000, with benefits in kind worth £58,000.

When Sir Desmond Pitcher, the former chairman of United Utilities, retired early he received a £443,000 pay-off.

He earned more than £2m in five years at the company.

In 1996 Keith Henry, the chairman of National Power, saw the value of his salary package rise by 74 per cent, to £782,555.

In addition to his salary of £325,000 he received a performance-related bonus of £110,000, benefits worth £12,855 and pension contributions of £334,000.

considering their final conclusions, to be published in a White Paper in the autumn.

The news that ministers are determined to clamp down on top people's pay rises comes after repeated calls for restraint fell on deaf ears.

Earlier this month, Ian Byatt, the director-general of the water industry watchdog, Ofwat, said the fairness of the regulatory regime was being undermined by what many saw as excessive increases in directors' pay.

This applies particularly to the water sector where customers have difficulty reconciling continuing real increases in bills with large pay rises for directors.

It recommends that big companies should use remuneration committees to recommend the level of bonuses and top pay awards, and that firms put their recommendations before shareholders.

that if companies can afford to pay large increases to directors they must be overcharging customers," he said.

Average household water bills have risen by 97.4 per cent since privatisation started 10 years ago. Last April, water and sewerage bills rose by up to £17 a year, with an average of nearly £29. Some unmetered customers will be paying 9.4 per cent more - almost three times the rate of inflation.

However, water companies pay £1.3bn a year in dividends to shareholders and have diverted £6.5bn in profits to parent companies since privatisation.

Yesterday, it was reported that Britain's top executives gave themselves pay rises of 18 per cent last year despite the Government's calls for restraint. Directors of 100 top companies earned an average of £300,000, a survey revealed.

The Prime Minister's official spokesman also delivered a message to industry yesterday that their decisions affected the whole economy. "As we have said before, people have got to recognise there is a link between pay rises they award themselves and the overall strength of the economy," he said.

The Prime Minister, Mr Brown and Margaret Beckett, the President of the DTL, had all given out a strong message on pay, he said. "There is not a private-sector incomes policy, but it is clearly the view of the Government and clearly of benefit to the economy if increases relate to performance by individuals and companies."

Richard Greenbury, chairman and chief executive of Marks & Spencer, recommended under the last government that big companies should use remuneration committees to recommend the level of bonuses and top pay awards, and that firms put their recommendations before shareholders.

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ANGLICAN BISHOPS attending the Lambeth Conference in Canterbury ignored appeals from the Government last night over the controversial Lords vote on equalising the age of consent for gay men.

Home Office minister Alan Michael had asked peers not to support moves by Baroness Young, former Tory leader of the Lords, to block the reduction of consent to gay sex from 18 to 16. But his appeal went unanswered by the bishops, who travelled from the conference last night to attend the debate in the House of Lords in defence of MPs' and gay rights campaigners protesting outside their doors.

Baroness Young said: "It is the kind of thing that worries

mothers and fathers who have a 16-year-old son and don't want the promotion of homo-sexuality."

Her campaign was boosted by the Archbishop of Canterbury, who said lowering the age of consent for homosexuals would be a "grave error" and morally unhealthy.

Baroness Young, 72, denied it was a "Tory plot", but she was backed by a heavy contingent of Tory peers in the debate, and some from Labour. They were angry with Tony Blair and the Government for allowing the age of consent to be lowered on a free vote in the Commons and used last night's vote to attack

the Prime Minister. A former Labour government whip, who is now a peer, accused Mr Blair of giving in to the pressure from "Labour twits".

The threat of the amendment's defeat led to a day of tumult at the Home Office. The measure is part of the Government's flagship Crime and Disorder Bill.

Labour MPs were furious at suggestions that Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, would bow to the peers and allow a defeat on the age of consent for gays in order to rescue his Bill.

The Home Secretary spent the day facing a dilemma over what action to take when the Bill returns to the Commons next Tuesday. Liberal Democrats and Labour backbenchers

were lining up to protest in the Commons if Mr Straw sought to abandon the gay rights measure to save the Bill.

Ann Keen, the Labour MP

who led the Commons vote to

insert the gay rights clause in

the Bill, was standing firm last night. "The game the House of Lords is playing is totally unknown to most of us. The European Court of Human Rights backs this, the overwhelming majority of the British public do,

as do all organisations that work with young people, and the overwhelming majority of the elected House of Commons."

Mr Straw was preparing to

offer the possibility of an

amendment to further govern-

ment legislation in the Autumn

to placate the backbenchers

who supported the lowering of

the age of consent for gays with a huge Commons majority of 207 votes.

Peers condemn gay sex at 16

BY COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

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Murdoch divorce may cost him billions

BY ANDREW GUMBLE
in Los Angeles

her husband's estimated £7bn personal and business wealth.

It was no secret that the couple were drifting apart - a separation was announced three months ago by the gossip columnist, Liz Smith, in the Murdoch-owned New York Post. However, the divorce petition, dated 5 July but only filed at the Los Angeles County Su-

perior Court on Tuesday, came as a surprise since it raised the possibility of an ugly family fight for control of the News Corp media empire.

The petition said Mrs Murdoch would seek to clarify the extent of the family assets and make claims against her husband accordingly. She was said to be "unaware of the full nature and extent of the community and quasi-community assets and obligations of the parties

and will amend this petition after discovery, or at trial".

Media experts said this probably referred to a tangle of family trust arrangements whereby at least some of the Murdoch money has already been passed on to the couple's three grown-up children, all of whom work for News Corp.

In her column yesterday, Ms Smith suggested the split would be without acrimony. "The Murdochs ... are now at

tempting to amicably negotiate a settlement on their properties and interests," she wrote.

But the potential for corporate conflict is certainly there, particularly since Mrs Murdoch is a News Corp director and could, if she chose, try to lay claim either to some of her children's trust money, or to the corporate holdings it represents.

Mr Murdoch, 67, met his wife when she was a trainee reporter at one of his newspapers, the Sydney Daily Mirror, in the mid-1960s.

He has taken US citizenship

and the couple have made Los Angeles their main home, although they have two other properties in America as well as homes in Britain and Australia.

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BBC newsreaders in uproar

The BBC's leading newsreaders are in uproar because the corporation is refusing to renew their contracts before planned changes to its news programmes.

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New PR sell for the Dome

Some of Labour's favourite PR men have been drafted in to help sell the Millennium Dome as part of a £23m marketing campaign.

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FOREIGN NEWS
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UN delegation arrives in Algeria

A high-level United Nations delegation arrived in Algeria last night for a two-week mission that offers the outside world its best hope yet of learning the truth about the savagery and human rights abuses committed in a six-year civil war, which has taken at least 65,000 lives.

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Asian ministers face up to crisis

Asian foreign ministers meet in the Philippines this week in an atmosphere of economic crisis, political uncertainty and growing reprimand toward Japan. Foreign ministers from the nine countries of ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations), including Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand, will begin formal deliberations on Friday after the region's most difficult year since the Second World War.

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SPORTS NEWS
PAGES 22 - 28

Everton chase after Dacort

Everton are hoping to sign the French midfielder Olivier Dacort in a £3m transfer from Strasbourg, while Crystal Palace are willing to pay £2.5m for two Argentines - Christian Ledesma and Pablo Rodriguez.

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Gymnast paralysed at Games

A 17-year-old Chinese gymnast was paralysed from the neck down after falling during the warm-up for the vault event on the third day of the Goodwill Games in New York. Sang Lan, China's champion women's vaulter, broke two vertebrae in her back.

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THURSDAY REVIEW
20-PAGE BROADSHEET SECTION

David Aaronovitch

"How can we now argue against the outing of senior members of the Church of England, on the basis that their sexuality is their own business? No, by God, let's have them out. And then let's chuck them out."

Page 3

Hamish McRae

"It can be very hard when you are in the middle of a revolution to realise quite what is happening, but we are. I think, in the middle of one now, one that occurs only every couple of hundred years."

Page 4

Bidisha

"Willing gentlemen are delivered to the girl's door for her decimation or rejection. She might meet someone she likes, or she might change her mind about the whole thing. It is different from, and a lot safer than placing a lonely heart ad in Time Out."

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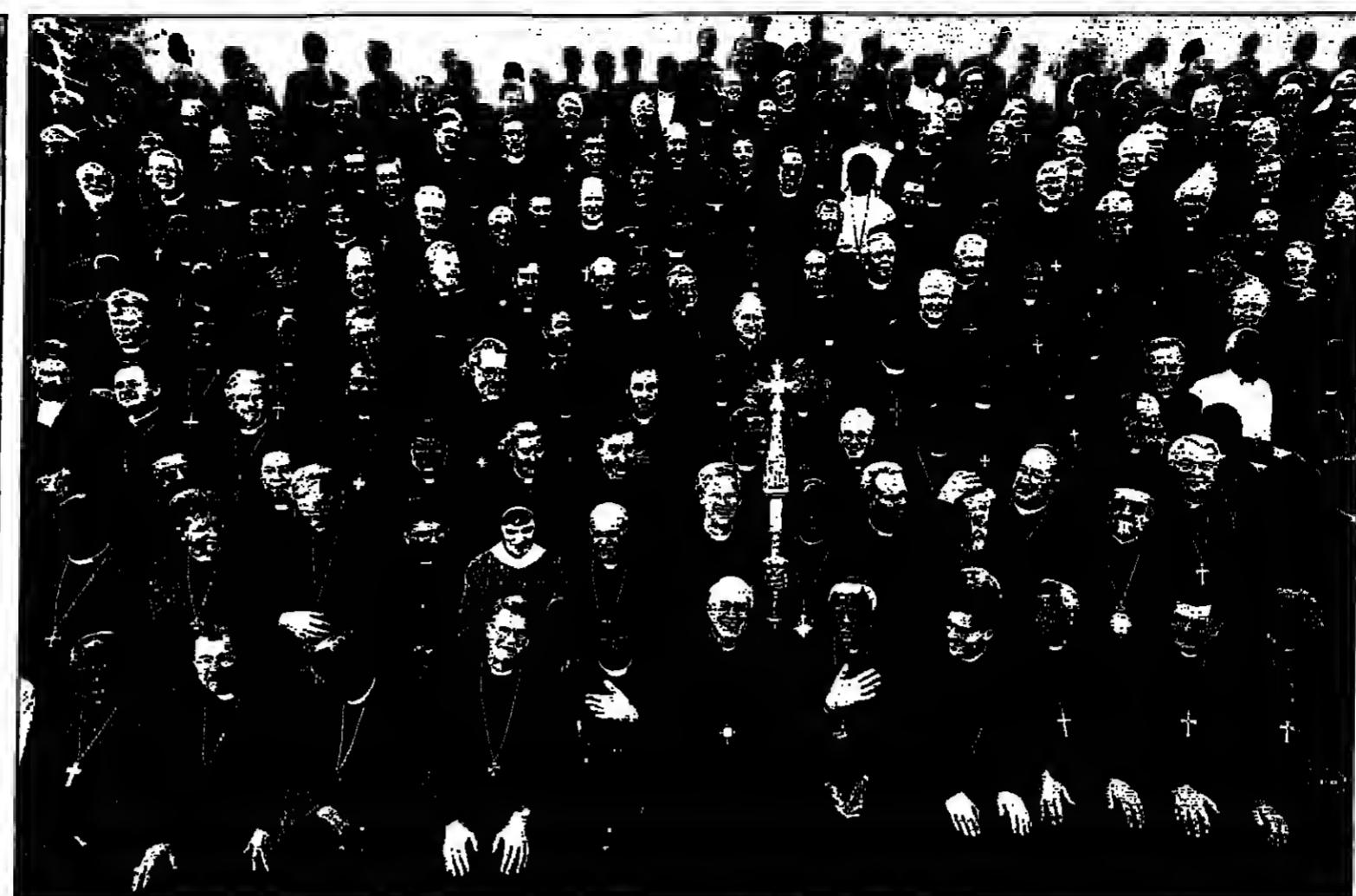
Andrew Marshall

"The American economy is motoring along as well as it has done since the Sixties, and people just aren't bothered by the things that the politicians would like to them to care about. Like politics. Things seem fine: why vote?" This "What, me, worry?" attitude has put the President at the top of the opinion polls, and probably will keep him there."

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Cryptic crossword, section one, page 28



The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Carey, opens his arms in welcome to the 739 Anglican bishops at the Lambeth Conference David Rose

Bishops cancel gay event

A PRESENTATION by a group of ordained lesbian, gay and bisexual Christians to the Lambeth Conference of Bishops, scheduled for today, has been cancelled at the last minute in the face of fierce opposition from senior clergy.

The decision to suppress the presentation was taken at a section meeting on Tuesday night which took place behind closed doors. One bishop asked why, if they were discussing homo-

BY CLARE GARNER
at the Lambeth Conference

sexuality, they were not discussing bestiality and child abuse, too.

The Bishop of Johannesburg, the Rt Rev Duncan Buchanan, who had arranged the presentation, was said to be "shell shocked" by the extreme reaction.

The Rev Colin Coward, an openly gay priest who runs

Changing Attitudes, the organisation invited to do the presentation, said yesterday: "The meeting last night was so traumatic that it was decided by Duncan Buchanan that the presentation wouldn't work."

"He was deeply emotionally affected by the strength and ferocity of feelings and the dynamic of the group."

The presentation was to have been by 20 ordained gay and lesbian Christians, seven of

whom were going to speak of their personal experiences. Afterwards there was going to be 45 minutes of questioning.

However, Bishops at the section meeting voted two-thirds in favour of cancelling today's presentation.

The Rt Rev John Sppong, the ultra-liberal Bishop of Newark, New Jersey, said it was a discouraging meeting. "Sixty bishops voted Duncan Buchanan down and they don't even want

to talk to gays. One African bishop op said 'Why don't we discuss bestiality and child abuse if we're going to discuss homosexuality?'

They impugned the integrity of Duncan Buchanan."

A Conservative American bishop said: "Several bishops said that if there were to be two homosexuals speaking we should also have people who live a celibate lifestyle, or have been healed of homosexuality."

Lockerbie trial may start next week

THE LIBYANS could be asked to hand over two Lockerbie bombing suspects for trial in The Hague as early as next week, Foreign Office sources said last night.

As Downing Street confirmed that Tony Blair had had talks with President Bill Clinton about the idea, it emerged that officials were tying up final

BY FRAN ABRAMS
Political Correspondent

details of a deal. Although they stressed that there was still some way to go, the negotiations between the UK and US and Holland could break a deadlock over the issue.

At Prime Minister's Questions, Mr Blair said the issue

was complex and added: "We've got to make sure that any solution we come up with is fully consistent with our absolute commitment to the integrity of the Scottish judicial system."

Britain and the US have maintained that two Libyans charged with the Pan Am bombing in December 1988 which killed 270 people should

be tried in Scotland or the US. Libya has argued that the men would not get a fair trial.

The latest suggestion, put by the Foreign Secretary Robin Cook to the American Secretary of State Madeleine Albright at Christmas, would see the men tried in The Hague under Scottish law by five judges, one of them Scottish.

The Government is under pressure to bring the case to court because of several factors, trade being one, but if nothing happens before the Scottish Parliament is set up in the year 2,000, its members may pass a Bill allowing the case to be tried in The Hague, which would put them into conflict with the English Parliament.

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Minister faces a
attack on his sta-

The divorce case that could reveal the secrets of the Murdoch empire

BY STEVE BOGGAN

IT COULD be the biggest divorce settlement of all time, a bitterly-contested fight for the heart and soul of the world's most prolific media empire, and a legal scramble for mansions and penthouses, jewellery and stocks, cars and aeroplanes.

If Anna Murdoch wants to take half of it, there is very little her husband can do to stop her. Under California's strict "common property" divorce laws, Mrs Murdoch, 53, is entitled to 50 per cent of everything Rupert Murdoch owns. And when your husband is listed as the 55th richest man in the world, that is a lot of money.

According to the 1998 *Forbes* magazine list of the world's richest people, Mr Murdoch, 67, is worth £1.3bn. Unbelievable as it may seem, that figure would appear to be an under-estimate. Other commentators have put his wealth at up to £7bn and with 789 businesses in 52 countries, four satellite services covering three continents and a newspaper portfolio covering much of Europe, Asia and South America.

Yesterday, the value of the Murdoch family's 30.78 per cent stake in the Australian-based News Corp stood at £3.156bn before taking into account Mr Murdoch's properties, homes, savings and other investments. Last year, he transferred the News Corp stock into the ownership of his three children, Elisabeth, 29, Lachlan, 26, and James, 24. However, lawyers for Mrs Murdoch can make a claim for some of that wealth or the grounds that it was built up while she was his wife.

The first thing the couple can fight over is their list of impressive homes in Britain, Australia and the US. In the US there is the £15m estate in Beverly Hills, complete with its Spanish-style mansion, 10-car garage, swimming pool, tennis court and servants' quarters. Then there is the mountain retreat in Aspen, Colorado, rumoured to be worth £20m, featuring a helicopter pad, and a

FAMILY HOLD THE REINS IN A BUSINESS THAT SPANS THE GLOBE

UK EMPIRE
News International owns The Times, Sunday Times, the Sun and News of the World. TV interests include a 40% holding in BSkyB which runs more than 40 channels, and is planning to major expansion with digital service Assets £2,193m

ASIAN EMPIRE
The Murdoch empire has been making inroads into the huge markets of China, India, and Pakistan with Star satellite service. Not yet developed sufficiently to be recorded separately in News Corp results

AUSTRALIAN EMPIRE
Owes a rack of regional and local titles as well as The Australian. As on other continents satellite and cable also plays an important part, the company also owns 50% of Foxtel which runs 34 channels Assets £9,768m

James (24)
President of News America
Digital Publishing

swimming pool in the living room. And finally, the £5m penthouse in Manhattan, New York.

In Australia, there is a £5m harbour-view penthouse in Sydney and a £7m mansion in Melbourne. And in London there is a £4m apartment in St James's.

Then before Mrs Murdoch's lawyers begin chasing her husband's wealth through the accounting labyrinth he has set up to legally avoid paying tax - last year, News Corp paid worldwide taxes of \$103m (£63.42m) on operating profits of \$1.32bn (£800m), a rate of just 7.8 per cent - they can argue over the other trappings of wealth, such as the Gulfstream IV jet, the fleet of luxury cars and jewels and art worth millions.

It is a sad end for the couple who met in 1965, when she was a 19-year-old reporter from one of his Australian newspapers who was sent to interview the boss. Afterwards, she described falling for his "lovely, brown, mischievous eyes."

After they announced their split in April, in the gossip column of the *New York Post*, one of Mr Murdoch's papers, it was thought Mrs Murdoch, a devout Catholic, would fight to keep the marriage together.

Now if it has fallen apart, it might precipitate an early takeover of the dynasty by the couple's three children. Lachlan, head of News Ltd, the Australian arm of the newspaper empire is tipped as the heir-apparent, although Elisabeth, general manager of broad-

casting at BSkyB, also wants to take the helm. More likely, according to some analysts, the empire could be broken up.

Until last year James had resisted the lure of the family business, choosing instead to set up his own hip-hop record label in New York. Now he is president of News America Digital Publishing, the Internet arm of Mr Murdoch's US operation.

And if the children, and their mother, choose to fight for control, there is much to fight over. In America, other interests include 50 per cent of the Fox Television networks, the *New York Post*, HarperCollins publishers and the Los Angeles Dodgers baseball team.

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PRIVATE LIVES GO ON BOARD AGENDA

RUPERT MURDOCH's position as head of News Corporation may seem unassailable, but increasingly the state - and stability - of a senior executive's private life is becoming an important issue for companies, their boards and investors.

The financial markets are driven by psychological perceptions of what could pose a threat to future business and the bigger the personalities involved, the more likely there

is to be concern about their influence in the boardroom.

When the Murdochs announced their "amicable" separation, it was said that Anna Murdoch would remain on the board. But the divorce petition, citing irreconcilable differences, suggests that the couple have not been able to reach a friendly agreement.

The question is, how will Mr Murdoch be affected by any prolonged - and public - wrangling with his soon-to-be ex-wife.

Sir Ralph Halpern initially weathered the storm over his extra-marital affair with the 18-year-old model Fiona Wright, but resigned three years later following a 39 per cent drop in the company's profits.

It is too early to say how Mr Murdoch will react to a bitter divorce battle played out in the Californian courts but there is no doubt that the rest of the boardroom will be watching closely.

KATE WATSON-SMYTH

Bowie's cowboy film makes wildlife go west

BY ANNE HANLEY
in Rome
AND ANDREW BUNCOMBE

go-ahead. The park people blame the council," he said. "It's the usual Italian passing the buck situation."

This is yet untitled movie is by no means the first to create turmoil; the history of filmmaking is full of stories of crews upsetting local communities by not paying their bills and creating havoc.

David Lean is said to have caused uproar in India when he destroyed an ancient temple to build a set for the Malabar Cave sequence in his 1984 epic *A Passage to India*.

"There are usually problems whenever a large Hollywood production moves into an area to start filming," said Denis Seguin, features editor of Screen International.

"You have a great number of people moving into an area - they can clog up the roads, fill

the bars. If it's a rural area, they can cause all sorts of problems.

"It is a film involving a high-profile star, the whole event can also become a tourist attraction in its own right with hundreds of people pouring into the area just to catch a glimpse."

In spite of the setbacks and difficulties that the film crews can create, most cities, regions and countries are keen to attract film-makers to boost their local economy.

"If we get a request for a certain location, we do all we can to help them find it," said Yvonne Cheal, commissioner with the South Wales Film Commission, a body set up in 1985 to provide free help and advice to location managers.

In the last 12 months the commission has helped attract a number of high-profile productions to South Wales, including *The Fear of Flying* with Kenneth Branagh and Helena Bonham Carter, and *Merlin*.

In Ireland where there are

tax breaks to encourage filmmakers, a new body - the Irish Film Commission - is currently being set up to provide assistance to producers and directors. Dozens of directors have already filmed in Ireland with productions such as *Braveheart*, *The Field* and *Robin Hood*.

Even certain scenes in films can have an effect on the micro-economy. The Crown Hotel in Amersham, Bucks, was inundated with requests from couples wanting to spend a night in its four-poster honeymoon suite after Hugh Grant and Andie MacDowell filmed an amorous scene there in *Four Weddings and a Funeral*.

Dr Doolittle. The 1967 children's favourite starring Rex Harrison, upset locals in Castle Combe, Wiltshire, when the crew dammed the brook to provide the water front for the fictional village of Puddleby-on-the-Marsh. There were threats to dynamite the set.

RELIEF FROM ALL THE BALLS YOU'VE BEEN LOOKING AT RECENTLY

UP IN the hills of Tuscany, the natives are getting restless. In fact the locals - in this case the local wildlife - have fled.

"The animals have gone. They won't stick around in all that chaos. It really isn't ideal," said Ugo Faralli, spokesman for the Italian League for the Protection of Birds.

The reason is the presence in the quiet Garfagnana hills of international stars David Bowie and Harvey Keitel. Along with Italian comedian Leonardo Pieraccioni, they are starring in a spaghetti Western being filmed in the area.

The locals love them and have been hired in their hundreds to come and watch the action. The wildlife has taken the alternative option. Unfortunately filming is taking place in a bird sanctuary.

Mr Faralli said he could not understand how the Cecchi Gori production group got permission. "The local council says the park authority gave the



Environment: John Prescott defends reprocessing plant as European ministers strengthen position

Stop all nuclear dumping, says EU

THE DEPUTY Prime Minister John Prescott was under heavy pressure from European environment ministers last night to agree that the UK would stop all radioactive discharges from Sellafield and remove all its disused oil rigs from the North Sea.

But at the meeting in Sintra, Portugal, of the OSPAR Convention, a new treaty protecting the marine environment in the north-east Atlantic, Mr. Prescott was stopping short of agreement. He was defending the UK position that the Sellafield nuclear reprocessing plant on the Cumbrian coast needs some discharges to continue, and that the bottom parts of up to 62 British rigs might be left in place.

Other countries – especially the Scandinavians, to whose shores Sellafield's radioactivity has spread – see these positions as unacceptable, and will be strongly critical of Britain if no agreement is reached today.

The Danish environment minister, Svend Auken, was reported to have had a table-thumping argument with Mr. Prescott at dinner on Tuesday night. On Sellafield, Mr. Auken said: "We need a commitment to zero discharges of radioactivity. It can be done year by year and step by step, but we need a commitment to cease discharges completely."

There are two resolutions, one calling for all radioactive discharges to the sea to be brought "close to zero," which would mean Sellafield's closure – and one with vaguer wording, backed only by Britain.

Yesterday Mr. Prescott made it clear that the closure of Sellafield was not an option: "This negotiation is not about

BY MICHAEL McCARTHY
in Sintra

closing Sellafield. It's about cutting down discharges as much as is technically feasible." Last night he was trying to find a form of words which would both satisfy the rest of Europe and not force the closure of the Cumbrian plant.

His position was made more exposed by the French, the only other country with a plant for the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel, who had backed the UK's position but have now put forward their own resolution accepting the "close to zero" formula with the caveat of "taking into account technical feasibility".

This is the work of the French environment minister, Dominique Voynet, who is a member of the country's Green Party and who has already asked the French plant, at Cap La Hague near Cherbourg, to sketch out a no-discharges scenario for the future. This could be done by simply storing the spent fuel instead of reprocessing it – an option which British Nuclear Fuels Limited, operators of Sellafield, say is open to them.

Britain has softened its stance on its 62 large oil platforms in the North Sea – whose substructures weigh more than 4,000 tons and stand in more than 75 metres of water. The UK now wants an option to leave in place the "footings" of the rigs, which can be anything from 10 to 30 metres high.

Judging the 62 rigs on a "case by case" basis would leave Britain the theoretical option of dumping them all.

Leading article,
Review, Page 3



John Prescott, Environment Secretary, in Sintra for the Ospar marine conference yesterday confronted by a WWF protest

Absent public workers cost £3bn a year

BY PHIL MURPHY

PUBLIC SECTOR workers are probably off on sick leave for a third more time than those working for private companies, according to a Cabinet Office report published today.

It concludes that all parts of the public sector should try to cut absenteeism by 20 per cent in the next three years, and 30 per cent over the next five years.

It also suggests that the true costs of sickness absence are much higher than previously assessed, costing the taxpayer an estimated £3 billion a year.

Recommendations in the study, commissioned by a Cabinet Public Expenditure Committee, include:

- Offering more scope for flexible working because that tends to reduce sickness absence;
- Withdrawing from some staff the facility to self-certify sickness absence;
- Setting trigger points for management action after individuals have clocked up significant amounts of sickness absence; and
- Encouraging public sector bodies to study real levels of absence by the end of next year and use them as a benchmark for improvement.

The report contains some withering assessments of the current situation, attacking what it calls "the absence culture" which pervades too much of the workforce in the public sector.

The report says: "As a segment of the economy, the public sector has traditionally been regarded as high in job security and generous in terms of leave.

"As such, the acceptable level of sickness absence was perceived to be relatively high.

"This approach to absence in public service is clearly no longer valid – if, indeed, it ever was," the report stated.

Government organisations which have tackled inherent absence problems "may have needed to work at altering this perception," it added.

So could they shut down Sellafield?

DISCHARGE OF water containing some radioactivity into the sea is an unavoidable part of the operation of the Sellafield Nuclear plant, say its owners, British Nuclear Fuels Limited.

The reason is that the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel to recover both unused uranium and plutonium produced by the fission process uses water in such vast volumes that there is nowhere physically capable of storing it.

Every day it operates, Sellafield discharges three million gallons of waste water into the Irish Sea. Most of the radioactivity has been extracted by two modern cleaning plants, and what remains, BNFL says, is minute and entirely harmless.

most modern reactor, Sizewell B in Suffolk.

Critics of reprocessing say that the dissolving of the spent fuel rods in acid to recover uranium and plutonium only produces more dangerous waste and more streams of it. Reprocessing was considered an economic necessity in the 1970s when a world shortage of uranium was thought to be looming. There is now a glut.

BNFL spent £200 million building the Thorpe reprocessing factory at Sellafield which has won £120m-worth of reprocessing contracts. There are now 6,500 tons of used fuel waiting to be reprocessed at Thorpe from pressurised water reactors in Germany and Japan, and from

the UK's half-dozen advanced gas-cooled reactors.

Sellafield also has a rolling backlog of 500 tons of spent fuel from the UK's ageing Magnox reactors, which is done on the site named B205. It is this which has led to the most recent rows over discharges.

Until the mid-70s the intermediate-level radioactive sludge from Magnox reprocessing was simply discharged into the sea, but public pressure forced BNFL to desist.

The sludge was kept in tanks for two decades until in 1994 the company, pressed by the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate, began to clean it up in a special plant built at a cost of more than £150million.

This plant cannot remove one radioactive waste product, Technetium 99, levels of which have increased dramatically in discharges into the Irish Sea.

There are only three options for Sellafield.

1) Continued reprocessing – the Government and BNFL are convinced that this is necessary whatever the protests;

2) Close the plant – highly unlikely because of the legally binding reprocessing contracts with other countries and the jobs of the 8,000 workers.

3) Move to dry storage – impossible, says BNFL, since spent Magnox fuel cannot be dry-stored; the magnesium-aluminium alloy sheathing the uranium eventually corrodes.

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Regulator 'too easy' on rail firms

NINE TRAIN companies ran worse services in the private sector than when they were run by British Rail, a parliamentary committee said yesterday.

MPs censured the Office of Passenger Rail Franchising (Opraf), headed by former accountant John O'Brien, as being "too easily satisfied" about some train companies' performance.

The Public Accounts Committee also raised concerns over the "apparent reluctance" to suspend Government subsidies to private train companies who failed to meet performance targets.

During the rail industry's progressive privatisation since early 1996, many campaigners have urged a complete overhaul of a system which they claim puts commercial interests before customers'. Ministers earlier this week released plans to sweep away Opraf and replace it with a "passenger-focused" watchdog.

The report by MPs into the functions of Opraf noted that nine companies had "shown a worse performance than before privatisation ... we found this deterioration unsatisfactory,

BY RANDEEP RAMESH
Transport Correspondent

especially as performance under British Rail appeared to be relatively unchallenging".

Opraf said yesterday that the situation had improved "considerably" since Mr O'Brien gave evidence to the committee in February. "Under the incentive regime, only five companies are now below par,"

said a spokesman for the Association of Train Operating Companies.

The PAC report is yet another blow for Opraf, which will be abolished under the Government's White Paper on transport. Critics say because Opraf sold off the train companies to the private sector it would be unlikely to take a tough line with the operators.

"Too often they acted as industry cheerleaders rather than public-interest champions," said Jonathan Bray of Save Our Railways. "Opraf rushed through privatisation and found themselves out of their depth when chaos ensued."

The new railway regulator, which will be known as the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA), is to have more powers at its disposal than Opraf - including the imposition of "instant" and unlimited fines for companies failing to meet performance levels.



Ellen Farrell (right), one of the original Lyons tea house waitresses, is joined by model Lucinda English for a Nippies' reunion at the Waldorf Hotel in London yesterday, 90 years after the chain was founded

Jeff Moore

NHS worry on 2000 bug

BY JEREMY LAURANCE
Health Editor

NHS HOSPITALS are appealing to the Government to suspend non-urgent admissions of patients and keep tens of thousands of hospital beds free for possible emergencies during December 1998 because of fears about the millennium bug.

The NHS Confederation, representing health authorities and trusts, wants ministers to allow waiting lists to rise in the run-up to the New Year celebrations. This would free hospitals to deal with emergencies arising from computer failures that could cause transport and other accidents.

In a policy paper issued last month, published today by Computer Weekly, the confederation warns that serious accidents could follow power failures to industrial and transport safety systems.

Tim Jones, author of the paper, said the trusts needed to be prepared for the consequences of civil unrest and crime arising from possible power cuts. Beds would be needed for people suffering hypothermia owing to power cuts.

The confederation says power companies have failed to prepare adequately for the year 2000 date change, which could cause computers to crash and stop the processes they control.

Extra £5bn for homes projects

BY AMANDA BROWN

Deal for Communities to provide intensive help to some of the country's most deprived neighbourhoods.

The Housing minister, Richard Caborn, told a London news conference: "Local authorities have a key role to play, but they must work with their partners so that housing strategies are comprehensive and work well alongside regeneration and other policies.

And more than £2bn under the New Deal for Regeneration will bring the most rundown estates back into repair.

Regeneration and housing programmes will be brought together locally, enhancing economic and job opportunities.

Within this, £300m will be made available under the New Deal for Communities to provide intensive help to some of the country's most deprived neighbourhoods.

The Housing minister, Richard Caborn, told a London news conference: "Local authorities have a key role to play, but they must work with their partners so that housing strategies are comprehensive and work well alongside regeneration and other policies.

"They must ensure services are of high quality and the substantial resources being invested in housing stock are used efficiently and effectively. That is what local people and the taxpayer deserve. And poor housing cannot be tackled in isolation."

The Local Government minister, Hilary Armstrong, said: "We are committed to offering everyone the opportunity of a decent home. This should not be seen as a holy grail as we approach the beginning of the next millennium, but as a practical demonstration that we value each and every person in this country. Decent housing is one of the most basic requirements for individuals and has a direct effect on their self-esteem. It is a linchpin in tackling social exclusion."

IN BRIEF

Appeal Court reserves judgment in Bentley conviction case

THE COURT OF APPEAL yesterday reserved judgment in the appeal against conviction brought on behalf of Derek Bentley, the teenager hanged 45 years ago for murdering a policeman. Lord Justice Bingham, sitting with Lord Justice Kennedy and Mr Justice Collins, said the court would announce its decision next week. Shortly before the announcement, Edward Fitzgerald QC, for Bentley, urged the judges to find that the murder conviction was "unsafe".

Bittersweet finale

THE MANAGER of rock band The Verve says he has "no idea" whether they will carry on after shows this summer.

The "Bittersweet Symphony" hitmakers have been shaken by the departure two weeks ago of guitarist Nick McCabe. Manager Jaz Summers told New Musical Express that he did not know what was happening.

Shakespeare trust saves deed

CAMPAGNERS HAVE secured a £101,900 Heritage Lottery grant enabling them to buy a rare Shakespearean document and keep it in Britain. The 1602 deed logs the playwright's purchase of 107 acres in Stratford-upon-Avon.

Shortage of eyes for transplant

AN UNEXPLAINED fall in the number of eyes available for transplant is causing alarm among doctors. Moorfields Eye hospital in London yesterday appealed for more donors.

MILES KINGTON

'Prostitutes are, I would guess, unusually law-abiding. The rules are stacked against them so much that they have to be extra-careful not to break them'

— THE THURSDAY REVIEW, PAGE 2 →

Boost for medical training

BY JEREMY LAURANCE

AN EXTRA 1,000 medical school places are to be created over the next seven years to head off a projected shortage of doctors in the millennium, ministers announced yesterday.

The increase of a fifth - equivalent to a new medical school - will take the annual number of new doctors being trained in Britain from 5,000 to 6,000.

Frank Dobson, the Secretary of State for Health, told the Commons that an extra 450 places would be provided by 2001, with the remainder by 2005. The announcement marks the Government's acceptance of the recommendation of the Medical Workforce Advisory Committee, which called for the increase of 1,000 places last November.

The committee estimated that the demand for doctors will rise at 1.7 per cent per year over the next 20 years, similar to the trend in the last 20 years. It said that an increase of 1,000 in the annual medical student intake would not produce a domestic oversupply by the year 2020. "Under any realistic scenario".

The new student places will be allocated among the existing medical schools.

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NHS
Worry
on 2000
Budget

BBC stalls on new contracts

THE BBC'S leading newsreaders are in uproar because the corporation is refusing to renew their contracts before planned changes to its news programmes.

Meanwhile, a power struggle is breaking over who will secure the lead newsreader position on a revamped *Six O'Clock News* that has been dubbed "Son of *Nationwide*" within the corporation.

Peter Sissons, Michael Buerk, Justin Webb and Edward Stourton will all see their contracts end before the end of the year but have been told that the BBC will not renew them

BY PAUL McCANN
Media Editor

automatically. Anna Ford and Martyn Lewis are also thought likely to be affected. In the past, their new contracts would have been resolved in advance.

Instead, the corporation is waiting to announce the outcome of its long-delayed review of news programmes. The so-called programme strategy review was begun last year amid fears that the presentation of news is going above viewers' heads, concentrates too much on Westminster and is losing younger viewers.

The review should have reported to the BBC's board of governors by early summer but has been delayed until the autumn.

"It is an amazing position," says one well-known newsreader. "Everyone who presents has been told there are no contracts being renewed, no matter who the person is. The problem is that everyone expected the review to be completed. The delay has caused a mess."

Some newsreaders are concerned that the BBC will use the review to slim down its roster of presenters so that the

channel becomes more like ITN which uses the same faces almost every night on ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5.

As well as fighting for their jobs, some presenters are also jockeying for position to see who will front the proposed replacement for the *Six O'Clock News*. BBC managers are thought to favour a longer, more magazine-style news programme. It would run for an hour and would lead into the regional news magazines like the *Sevenites* current affairs show *Nationwide*.

The BBC is also thought to be looking for a younger, female

presenter in the mould of ITN's Katie Derham to inject some vigour into its new shows.

"No one knows what they are going to be presenting and so they can't be given contracts," says one BBC News insider.

"There is a lot hanging on

which bulletins they get allocated, so many of them are very worried."

A spokesman for the BBC denied that there will be a cull, saying: "If someone's contract ends this week it will be renewed but everyone knows the review is taking place and everyone will have to wait and see the outcome."

Making the BBC's revamp of its news and current affairs output even more complex is the question of what to do about Scotland. With the country getting its own parliament, BBC Scotland is agitating to get at least one major bulletin that would supply Scottish, UK and international news from an Edinburgh or Glasgow studio and news room. A *Scotland at Six* programme is currently the favourite option.

Also worried about their position in the new line-up are the producers and journalists on the flagship political Sunday morning show, *On the Record*. Andy Allan

Another revamp for Sky Movies

BY PAUL McCANN

THE SATELLITE broadcaster Sky, under pressure from publicans and the public over high subscription prices, re-launched its movie channels for the second time in nine months yesterday in an effort to give viewers better value for money.

Sky announced three new channels to replace Sky Movies One and Two, which were launched last November. The company hopes Premier, a new channel of blockbuster films hosted by BBC veteran Barry Norman, will bring viewers back to its movie services. A second channel of more arty films and one for "classic" movies are also planned.

Once Sky begins transmitting digital signals there will be 11 channels carrying films, all with staggered start times so at least five movies will begin every hour. "In any one evening there will be 25 films to choose from at a time to suit their lifestyle," said Elisabeth Murdoch, Sky's general manager of broadcasting. "That represents a revolution in movie choice."

But subscription rates are rising, and one group of subscribers is taking the channel to the Office of Fair Trading for a second time because of a 39 per cent increase. The Federation of Licensed Victuallers, The Guild of Master Victuallers and the Scottish Licensed Trade have all submitted complaints to the OFT. Sky claims it has to raise the prices pubs pay for Sky Sports to pay for its £270m deal for exclusive rights to Premiership football.

Tony Payne, head of the FLV, said: "An average pub was paying £5.99 a month in 1993 for Sky. By last year that had gone up to £7.8 a month and this year they want to put it up to £18.5 a month. They used public houses to get the public interested - now people have signed up at home they're not so bothered about us."

TOP PRESENTERS WAITING TO HEAR THE NEWS ABOUT THEIR FUTURE



PETER SISSONS



MICHAEL BUERK



MARTYN LEWIS



ANNA FORD



ED STOURTON

Long-time presenter of Channel 4's heavyweight news. Attracted to the BBC in 1993 by a hefty signing-on fee, Sissons, 56, was quickly judged too serious for *Question Time* and has since been one of the main anchors for the *Nine O'Clock News*. Carried much of the coverage of the day of the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, on his shoulders.

Will be forever associated with the first heart-breaking reports from the Ethiopian famine of 1984. Credited with inspiring the world to action, which included Band Aid and Live Aid. Now 52, he shares main billing on *The Nine O'Clock News* with Sissons. Also hosts *999*, the emergency reconstruction programme, and, more suitably, *The Moral Maze* on Radio 4.

Usually seen hosting the *Six O'Clock News*, Martyn Lewis attracted widespread derision from colleagues and commentators in 1993 when he called for "less depressing" news. If the worst fears of the strategy review are realised his time may have come. Lewis, 52, writes books about dogs and cats in the news and does lots of charity work.

A veteran from the early days of female newsreaders, Anna Ford, 54, has suffered for her looks and cut-glass accent. Just this week the *Six O'Clock News* presenter lashed out at the many men in broadcasting who had crossed her. A hero to many for throwing a glass of wine at Jonathan Aitken and waking up Middle England by swearing on the *Today* show.

Taking away at the *One O'Clock News* where few at work see him, Stourton, 40, is better known for replacing Nick Ross on Radio 4's phone-in show. Keeps his hand in as a reporter and still does the odd *Panorama*. Came under fire in Bosnia and, while a reporter at ITN, famously described Britain taking over the six-month "pregnancy" of the European Union.

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Demob-happy MPs enjoy Prime Minister's playtime

MPS WERE getting demob-happy as the Prime Minister faced his penultimate question time, yesterday, before the summer recess.

Mr Blair and Mr Hague traded insults on transport and the economy with plenty of synthetic heat and not much daylight.

The Leader of the Opposition began by describing John Prescott's announcement, earlier in the week, as "a dog's breakfast" and upbraided him for being absent "presumably but is running late". Actually the Deputy Prime Minister is in Portugal being greener-than-thou while trying to sort out nuclear dumping but Mr Hague's one-line asides are becoming reg-

ular morale-raising entertainments for his backbench troops.

The two leaders asked each other pertinent questions which required answers that the other avoided. They both sounded a little jaded and could do with a holiday. Mr Hague's yellowish pallor suggested that he should be giving top priority to the bucket and spade and Mr Blair's bronzed complexion suggests more than a hint of make-up.

They slugged it out over the public expenditure announcement, with Mr Hague saying the government's economic forecasts were wildly over-optimistic. Nothing new here. I have never heard a Prime

Minister or Chancellor be anything other than optimistic even when the depths of recession were staring them in the face. Norman Lamont's "green shoots" are still remembered. The Prime Minister, as he nearly always does, sidestepped the question and, in exasperation, Mr Hague prayed in aid a sheaf of Treasury papers which he then chucked across the despatch box.

Mr Blair smiled at the gimmick and said: "Instead of throwing bits of paper at me" the Tories should say whether they wanted more or less public expenditure.

Paddy Ashdown, celebrating 10 years as leader of the Liberal De-

THE SKETCH



**MICHAEL
BROWN**

mocrats, got in on the act. Every time he is called by the Speaker there are, without good reason, groans from Tories and Labour: "I am most grateful for the good

wishes of honourable members if that's what it's supposed to be," he said to general derision. "You're wrong again," shouted out Dennis Skinner (Lab, Bolsover).

Mr Ashdown said that for every one per cent increase in inflation there was a potential £50m reduction for health and education. The Prime Minister reiterated his faith in the government's forecasts and said the additional resources provided were substantially more than Liberal Democrats were promising. They would spend from an additional one penny on income tax.

Dr Norman Godman (Lab, Greenock & Inverclyde) was concerned that the United States were

not paying their United Nations dues to fund peacekeeping. He wanted to know when Mr Blair was going to "stand up to these people on Capitol Hill". The Prime Minister pointed out that among his many and various duties "responsibility for the American Congress isn't one and I'm pretty thankful for that".

No

Prime Minister: that really

would be a different cup of tea - hav-

ing, like President Clinton, to argue

your case to a legislature con-

trolled by the opposition would re-

ally give us the chance to see what

you are made of.

We rounded off playtime with a

point of order from opposition ju-

nior trade and industry spokesman: Christopher Chope (C, Christchurch) who wanted a statement on press allegations that Nigel Griffiths, the Trade Minister, has had rows with his civil servants. Apparently they don't like him coming in at 7am and working too hard and he has broken the traditional rule of silence on relations between mandarins and ministers. It is alleged that Mr Blair has asked for reports on junior ministers from senior boffins to help him decide on his reshuffle.

I'm on Mr Griffiths' side. In any battle between ministers and civil servants my rule is always "up the minister".

Blair rejects Hague's 'dog's breakfast' jibe

TONY BLAIR yesterday launched robust defence of the Government's public transport spending plans, challenging William Hague to spell out which of the proposals he would cut.

The Prime Minister's demand came after Mr Hague had challenged him to rule out new taxes on motorists, and labelled the Government's plans "a complete dog's breakfast".

The Opposition leader said of the Transport White Paper announced on Monday: "Isn't it the truth that it's elderly people and low-income motorists, people only just able to pay for a car and can't afford an increase in the cost of using their car, who will be hit hardest by the new taxes you've proposed, without any guarantee that they will receive any benefit in return?"

The Prime Minister retorted:

"I think the Conservative attack on the possibility of congestion charges and taxes reaches new heights of opportunism and hypocrisy, even for them."

"Let me quote from the April 1996 document put out by your Government when you were a Cabinet member: it said that local authorities are to take the main role in deciding the right strategies for their areas."

"They have to have suffi-

PRIME MINISTER'S QUESTIONS

BY DAISY SAMPSON

cient powers for the job. These may include powers to restrain traffic by local licensing measures or electronic charging or powers aimed at reducing the provision of off-street non-residential parking.

"It then went on to say the Government will therefore discuss with local authority associations, with the presumption in favour of introducing legislation in due course.

"So we are taking forward precisely the work that your Government did ... and our plans for pensioners and for rural transport will help those on low incomes, not harm them."

The Conservative leader again pressed for a "guarantee" that new taxes would not be levied against "school-run mothers ... people struggling home with their weekly shopping, and people in the countryside".

He told MPs that the Government's figures on investment were faulty. The £1.8bn extra investment above 1991 spending plans the Government claimed to be putting into transport amounted to only £22m in "new money", he said.

In what is likely to be the Government's last slot from now until the election, the Prime Minister asked Mr Hague to clarify his spending-cutting policy. "You appeared to be attacking us for not spending enough on transport."

"Yesterday you were telling us our spending plans were dangerous and irresponsible," he said.

Mr Blair told the House that unvalidated waiting-list figures for June showed a further fall of 20,000.

Mr Hague later challenged the Prime Minister over spending increases of £1.1bn and the growing social security budget. He said this looked "increasingly like a reckless gamble with jobs and prosperity in this country".

But Mr Blair insisted the forecasts for the economy were good and that Britain would have a current account surplus, as opposed to the deficit under the Tories.

The debt to gross domestic product ratio was down, he said, and borrowing would come down to near zero.

Mr Hague, holding Treasury forecasts, said the Chancellor's department admitted the Government's forecasts were more optimistic than 27 leading City forecasts.

democrats, got in on the act. Every time he is called by the Speaker there are, without good reason, groans from Tories and Labour: "I am most grateful for the good

Paddy Ashdown and his wife, Jane, on 28 July 1988, when he became leader of the then Social and Liberal Democrats. Ten years on, he declared yesterday that he will lead the party into the next election and beyond



£40,000-a-year lure to stop teachers' exodus

THE GOVERNMENT yesterday

wielded a big stick over failing schools, but offered high-flying teachers a substantial carrot.

Stephen Byers, schools standards minister, combined a warning that some schools were "beyond redemption" and should be closed, with an assertion that all successful teachers should be paid £40,000 a year.

The big mistake was to re-

gard all 150 local education

SCHOOLS

BY BARRIE CLEMENT

authorities, 24,000 schools and 100,000 teachers as the same, he told the Commons Select Committee on Education.

"They are all different and should be treated differently and rewarded differently," he said. Weak schools should be given two years to improve or face closure.

The minister said that he would like all teachers to be "excellent" but conceded that this would not happen. However, he pledged that there would be no "cap" on the number of teachers who would qualify for extra pay because of their performance.

From September, there will be considerable flexibility over teachers' pay in the newly-created Education Action

Zones, with some earning £40,000 a year. Mr Byers said there was no reason why staff elsewhere should not be paid similar amounts for providing pupils with an "excellent education".

An Education Green Paper due out in the autumn would go much further. It would contain proposals for a new employment contract for teachers and plans for improved pen-

sions, which would apply from 2000.

Mr Byers confirmed that performance-related pay would be introduced, based on an assessment of the particular institution, its catchment area and the "added value" contributed by the teacher.

Mr Byers said the profession was "not adequately valued". It often went unreported, but he believed that many teachers

were "doing a good job, often in difficult circumstances".

It had to be recognised, nevertheless, that some were doing a better job than others and should be offered more pay.

He said that some teachers were subject to abuse and it was the Government's aim to ensure that they were able to work in a professional environment.

While the pay for new grad-

uates teachers was comparable with salaries elsewhere, there seemed to be an exodus five to seven years into their careers.

At times when many of them were thinking of starting families and beginning to take on larger mortgages, they saw the salaries of university contemporaries in other professions begin to soar. That problem had to be addressed, he said.

Mr McNulty said: "I certainly shall. I was referring to the disreputable business of these companies. I would not impugn any Member here for having disreputable behaviour and happily withdraw it."

In a debate last week, Mr Redwood said: "I am a director of that company, which is not out to undermine building societies."

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THE HOUSE



Car parking

PLANS TO approve a £2.34m refurbishment of the House of Lords car park just days after company parking was taxed were blocked by peers last night. The Lords voted by 148 to 142 against the refurbishment of Old Palace Yard.

Today ■ Commons: Treasury questions. Northern Ireland Bill committee. Adjournment debate on Junction 8 of M62 (Helen Jones, Lab, Warrington N)

■ Lords: Scotland Bill, committee. Special Immigration Appeals Commission (Procedure) Rules. Conditional Fee Agreements Order. Food Protection (Emergency Prohibitions) (Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning) Order.

Hospital waiting lists cut by 21,000

NHS TARGETS

BY FRAN ABRAMS

HOSPITAL WAITING lists dropped by 21,000 last month, the Secretary of State for Health, Frank Dobson, announced yesterday.

Mr Dobson told a Commons' committee hearing that the number of patients waiting for treatment had dropped significantly in June compared with the end of April.

Ministers had faced criticism over waiting lists as they continued to rise after Labour came to power. Yesterday, Mr Dobson told MPs that the tide had turned. "In the run-up to the general election we promised that we would get them down because they were too long, and that is a promise we intend to keep," he said.

Unconfirmed figures for the end of June showed a total of 1,287,000 people waiting, compared with 1,308,000 in May. At the end of March the figure was 1,297,000 but it rose in April and stayed constant in May before beginning to drop.

Last year, the waiting lists

continued to rise despite Labour's promise. The Government's target is 1,160,000 by April 1999, and 1,060,000 by the end of this Parliament.

Mr Dobson also told the committee that last week's Comprehensive Spending Review would mean significant extra funding. The National Health Service would get £23bn extra next year, £5.9bn in 2001-02 and £8.6bn in 2002-03.

He said that meant an average of 4.7 per cent in real terms, compared with an average increase of 2.5 per cent in the last parliament.

Confirming the fall in waiting lists at question time, the Prime Minister also announced that the intake of students to medical schools was to be raised by 1,000.

"The reason we have put the substantial extra amount of money into the NHS is to give it the investment that it needs, but to couple that with the reform that it needs as well. One of those reforms is to get rid of the Tory internal market and devote those resources to health care, another is to end the two-tier nature of the health service," Tony Blair said.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Social Fund

THE ANNUAL report on the Social Fund for 1997-8, published last night, records that total gross expenditure was £520.5m.

That included almost two million non-repayable grants and interest-free loans worth £462m and 48,000 funeral payments, 197,000 maternity payments and 55,000 cold weather payments worth a total of £58.5m. Pensioners received a total of £200m in winter fuel payments.

The Under-Secretary for Social Security confirmed the report's publication.

Transport

The Secretary of State for Scotland announced last night the publication of his White Paper on integrated transport. Mr Dewar said that his paper "will begin a new chapter in the history of Scottish transport" in answer to a written question from Des Browne (Lab, Kilmarock and Loudoun).

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Top restaurants close as staff desert posts after sacking



Chef Gordon Ramsay at The Aubergine restaurant

BY LINUS GREGORIADIS

THE CAPPUCCINO of haricots blancs with sautéed girelles and grated truffle is off tonight. So is the braised tranches of brill with baby courgette farcie and tagliatelli of chervil, served with a veloute of feves. In fact, the whole kitchen is closed. An unseemly spat has broken out in the temperamental restaurant business, leading to the shutting of two of London's top eateries.

Forty-five workers at Aubergine, in Fulham, and L'Oranger, in Piccadilly, have walked out in protest over the sacking of a chef. They blame the rebellion on the forced departure of the award-winning chef Marcus Wareing last Saturday.

Staff have also been unsettled by the resignation earlier this week of Gordon Ramsay, the restaurant's consultant chef, who is planning to open a restaurant bearing his own name in Chelsea.

A-Z Restaurants Limited, which owns both, decided to

Selection from Aubergine's set menu at £50 per head for three courses:

Starters

Ravioli of lobster poached in a lobster bisque, served with fine basil purée and confit tomatoes.

Baby spring lamb with crushed new potatoes, sautéed artichokes and thyme jus.

Desserts

Apricot soufflé served with chocolate sorbet amaretto.

Tarte tatin of pears with vanilla ice-cream.

French Cheeses

spinach and sauce Saint-Emilion.

Ballotine of poulet de Bresse cooked in its own stock, served with light morel sauce.

Baby spring lamb with crushed new potatoes, sautéed artichokes and thyme jus.

Main course

Fillet of turbot poached in red wine, served with creamed leeks, pomme purée, baby

close the restaurants on Tuesday night after disgruntled staff phoned in sick.

It is believed that many of the workers will join Mr Ramsay, an acclaimed two-star Michelin chef when he opens his restaurant in September.

Mr Ramsay said last night that he was angry that A-Z had sacked his "right-hand man".

He added: "My staff have submitted one week's notice

and phoned in with food poisoning. The staff met together after the sacking of Marcus Wareing and are totally disgusted. They have got no interest in working out their notice. I can't force them to work their notice."

Mr Ramsay said that the staff members had told management that they had been struck down with food poisoning.

Commenting on his resig-

nation from A-Z Restaurants, he said: "They override my decisions, so what is the point of continuing my consultancy?"

A-Z Restaurants refused to comment yesterday on when the restaurants - which have six-month waiting lists for a table - will be re-opened.

A rebel kitchen worker at L'Oranger said yesterday: "We work for Mr Ramsay and Marcus, not for A-Z management."

Mr Wareing, L'Oranger's one-star Michelin chef, was escorted from the restaurant's premises on Saturday following a dispute with A-Z management.

Mr Ramsay, a former Glasgow Rangers footballer, said: "I have enjoyed five fantastic years at Aubergine but I feel that now is the time to move on. My ambition is to obtain a third Michelin star and I believe the new restaurant will achieve this goal."

Police are investigating the theft of nearly £1,500 of tips and vandalism of L'Oranger on the night of Mr Wareing's sacking.

Tesco in battle to end hi-fi 'price fix'

BY NIGEL COPE
Associate City Editor

The major supermarket groups turned up the heat on higher-priced consumer goods yesterday with plans to introduce heavily discounted electrical goods and cosmetics.

Tesco led the way with a scheme to sell compact disc players for £50. It has commissioned Amstrad to produce 275,000-worth of the machines under its own Fidelity brand after being refused supply by other major manufacturers.

The chain also vowed to continue selling "grey market" designer goods bought through unauthorised channels, despite a European Court ruling last week that it is illegal to sell such products if they are sourced from outside Europe.

Asda also kept up the pressure on cheap goods acquired from the "grey market" yesterday with a range of Clarins cosmetics sold for up to 20 per cent off high-street prices.

An Asda spokesman said: "Like perfume companies, skincare brands want to control supply of their products so they can maintain high prices. But we're not prepared to tolerate this kind of cosy cartel."

Asda is due tomorrow to meet Nigel Griffiths, the consumer affairs minister, to discuss the implications of last week's European ruling which Asda says plays into the hands of "snooty brand owners".

Tesco's move to stock CD players nationally is part of a series of aggressive pricing moves into electrical goods. In May it sold Amstrad 23-inch televisions for £250. Tesco is also running a regional trial selling Fujitsu personal computers for £799.99, around 25 per cent below equivalent high-street prices. The trial is so far in only two Tesco stores, in Pitsea, Essex and New Malden, Surrey, but demand has been so strong that the scheme might be expanded.

The system of electrical goods manufacturers suppos-

edly "fixing prices" by recommending a selling price to retailers will become illegal in September, following a Monopolies and Mergers Commission report. Manufacturers and retailers say prices are similar not because of any "fixing" but because the electrical goods market is so competitive.

John Gildersleeve, Tesco's commercial director, said: "Big-name electrical suppliers seem reluctant to let us into the market. Because of the tight-knit nature of the electrical goods community competition has been limited, but fortunately for the British consumer some manufacturers are now breaking ranks and working with us to give better value to shoppers."

The major supermarkets have been aggressively expanding their non-foods sales with moves into cosmetics and toiletries, electrical goods, perfumes, designer clothing, music and video and housewares like pots and pans.

Tesco has ambitions to make its George brand of clothing Britain's second-biggest clothes name, after Marks & Spencer's St Michael. Tesco has been targeting electrical goods, designer clothing and takeaway food, such as pizzas. Sainsbury's this week opened its first in-store coffee bar in its Clapham branch.

Tesco is looking to add drive-thru restaurants at many of its stores to offer customers a range of food to go, such as Chinese, Indian and Tex-Mex. New figures yesterday also showed that Sainsbury and Tesco have grabbed 9 per cent of new British credit-card lending over a 12- to 18-month period.

Tesco says it has increased its non-food sales by 75 per cent in five years as it attacks new markets.

Hopes rise for free museum admission

BY DAVID LISTER
Arts News Editor

The most dramatic few days for Britain's national museums began yesterday with nearly £30m of lottery money going to the Victoria and Albert Museum and the National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside.

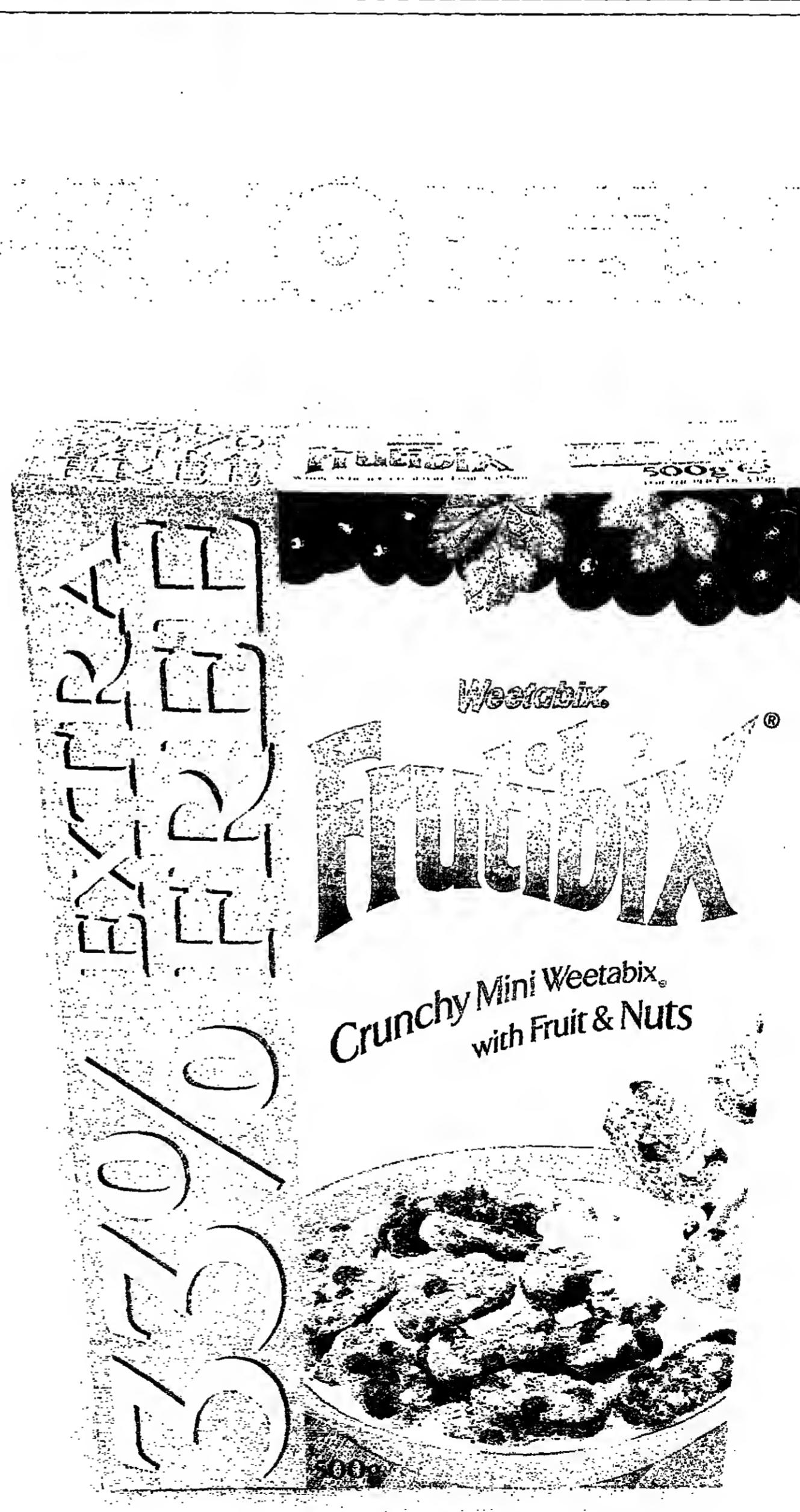
Tomorrow, the Secretary of State for Culture, Chris Smith, will announce details of his department's spending plans, which will include widening access to museums, almost certainly through extending free admission.

Both the V&A and the Merseyside galleries, which include the Liverpool Museum, the Walker Art Gallery and the Museum of Liverpool Life, charge for entrance. They will

be waiting to see whether lottery largess will be followed by the promise of the restoration of free admission.

Yesterday it was announced that the Merseyside galleries are to receive £23.97m from the Heritage Lottery Fund - its second largest single grant - to upgrade galleries and put more treasures on public view, while the V&A in London will get £15m.

The new galleries will house more than 3,000 pieces of fine and decorative art and will tell the story of British art, craft and design from the Middle Ages through to the Victorian period.



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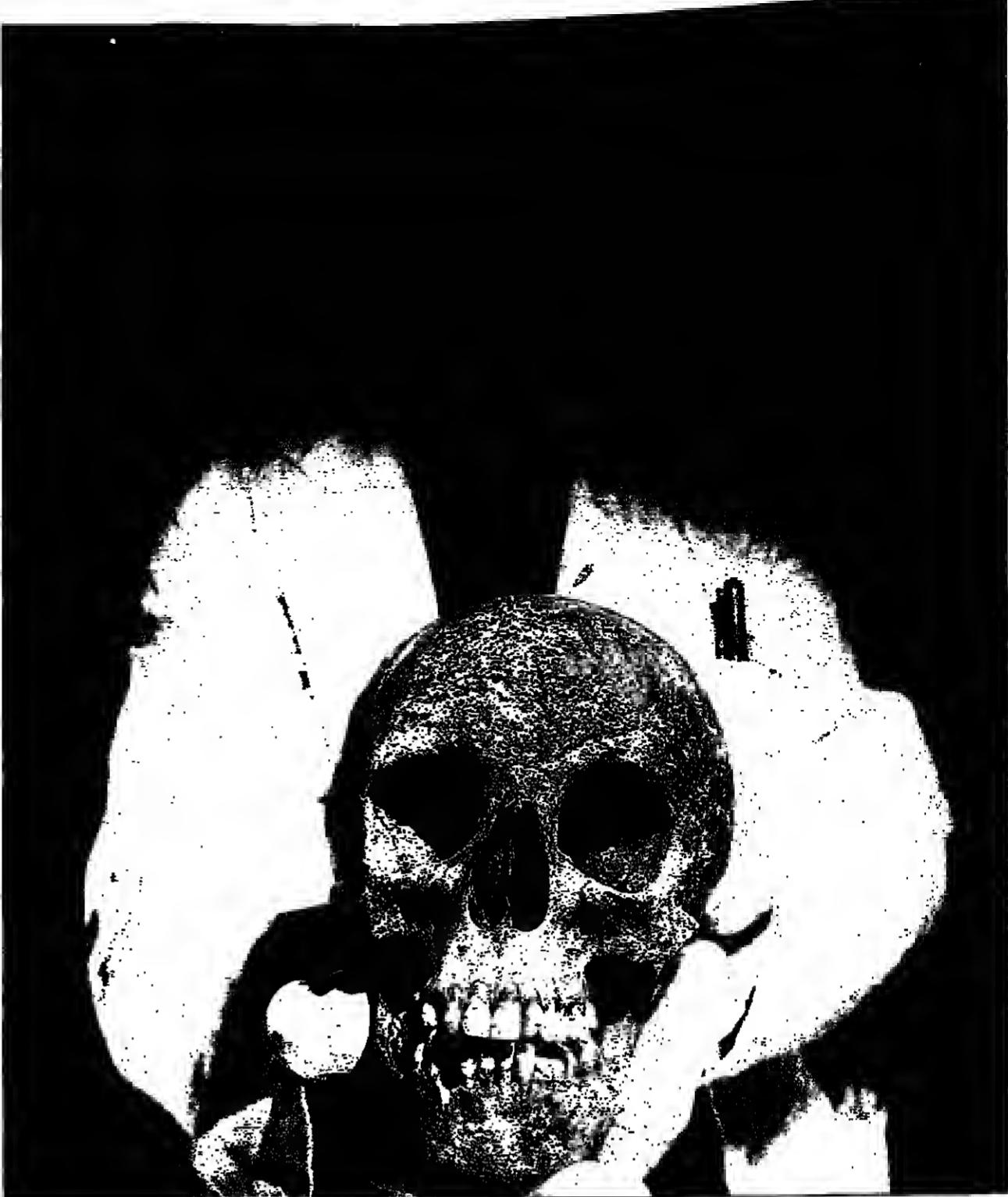
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Bill White of the Museum of London holding the skull of a young woman found in a 200-year-old paupers' grave. The remains are part of the London Bodies exhibition which opens this autumn. *Nicola Kauri*

Woodhead attacks schools research

MOST ACADEMIC research into education is second-rate, partisan and of little use to teachers, according to a scathing report published yesterday.

Professor James Tooley of Newcastle University said that many research studies were poorly researched, obsessed by political correctness and suffered from "logical incoherence". He said that the £70m allocated to education research was poorly spent, adding that it should fund work that would help raise standards.

The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), which commissioned the study, condemned the standard of research and called for government action to make studies more relevant.

Chris Woodhead, the Chief Inspector of Schools, endorsed Professor Tooley's findings yesterday, describing them as "dis-

turbing". He said: "Considerable sums of public money are being pumped into research of dubious quality and little value. It confirms that the crucial areas of initial teacher education and in-service training are being ill-served by the research community."

"The taxpayer is funding this to the tune of £70m a year, which would fund 2,800 teachers. It's certainly a large sum of money in my book."

But academics defended their work and accused both Ofsted and Professor Tooley of producing "polemic masquerading as research".

Professor Tooley studied 41 articles appearing in the four main academic journals on education. He said too much of the work was subjective, partial

and included little evidence, and he accused academics of conducting "Chinese whispers" by quoting and re-quoting other researchers in their studies.

He said: "There is a great deal of poor-quality research. These people are training teachers, so they have a great impact on the educational work on schools."

The examples cited in his report include a study of a lesbian PE teacher who spoke of her fears of discrimination. Professor Tooley argued that the study found no evidence of discrimination.

Mr Woodhead said that Ofsted provides a huge amount of data on schools, and said: "I'm not at all sure what additional work is required."

Dr Kim Howells, the minister for lifelong learning, echoed the report's criticisms. He said: "The quality of educational

research has been a long-standing concern of this Government."

But Professor David Hustler, the lead editor of the British Educational Research Journal, which was examined in Professor Tooley's study, said the report was polemical and itself represented poor research.

Professor Margaret Brown, the president of the British Educational Research Association, also criticised the report, but proposed setting up a commission to produce guidelines for researchers.

She said: "James Tooley's report is based on a thorough analysis of a particular kind and makes an interesting, if partisan, contribution to the current debate about educational research. However, few researchers will agree with all his idiosyncratic strictures about research methods."

£260m profit from used cars

BY JIM ARMITAGE

JOHN MADEJSKI, the multi-millionaire chairman of Reading Football Club, made himself even richer yesterday with the sale of his publishing company for £260m.

Mr Madejski, who held a 67 per cent stake in Auto Trader's publisher, Hurst Publishing, founded the company in 1976 with a fellow entrepreneur, Paul Gibbons. It has now been sold to BC Partners, an investment group that specialises in company buyouts.

Auto Trader is the company's best-known title, and has the biggest circulation in the market of car classified advertising magazines. Its growth has been fuelled by the strength of the UK used-car market, which has grown more than 45 per cent since 1992.

Mr Madejski rescued Reading FC from bankruptcy in 1990. He said: "It only seems like yesterday we launched Auto Trader in the Thames Valley."

"We have great belief in the strength of the business, and it is with some reluctance that we pass on the reins. However, I shall continue to keep an eye on its progress, as president of the company."

He is reported to have said:

"True, I could buy anything I want. But once you know you can have it, you don't want it."

Subject defends McKenna's act

BY MIKE TAYLOR

A MAN WHO was told under hypnosis that he had "lost his willy" has written to the lawyers of the hypnotist Paul McKenna to assure him that he enjoyed the experience, the High Court heard yesterday.

The letter, from a hypnosis volunteer on a recent American television chat show, came in response to allegations that Mr McKenna's stage routines could put people under stress and affect their mental well-being.

"I found the experience to be interesting and I was not disturbed while hypnotised or when told my willy had gone," wrote the American, named Benji, in a letter addressed to "Dear British people".

"I know it appears I was distressed and upset, but I was not in any way. To say it was anything less than a pleasant experience would be wrong."

The letter was produced while Mr McKenna was being cross-examined by Anthony Scrivener QC, who is representing a man who claims in a £200,000 damages action that the onset of his schizophrenia was due to taking part in one of the hypnotist's stage shows.

On Tuesday, Mr Justice Toulson



Madejski: Multimillionaire

Hurst's turnover last year was £72m - up 22 per cent on the previous year. Its 52 publications have a combined average circulation of more than 700,000.

Last year Mr Madejski rescued Reading FC from bankruptcy in 1990. He said: "It only seems like yesterday we launched Auto Trader in the Thames Valley."

"We have great belief in the strength of the business, and it is with some reluctance that we pass on the reins. However, I shall continue to keep an eye on its progress, as president of the company."

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son watched an hour-long video of the chat show hosted by American television star Howard Stern, featuring the "lost willy" routine, a woman believing she was having an orgasm under hypnosis, and a man who was told that he was pregnant.

Today, Mr Scrivener told Mr McKenna: "Looking at that tape, it is obvious that the man who was told he had lost his penis is very distressed."

Mr McKenna said that this was not true - as was clear from Benji's letter. He said: "The entertainment value had nothing to do with distress. The comedy is in the ludicrousness of his situation. He knows he hasn't really lost his willy, but at the same time he is behaving as though he has."

The damages action against the hypnotist is being brought by Christopher Gates, 30, of Buckinghamshire, who claims to have suffered psychiatric injury through being hypnotised at the Swan Theatre in Wycombe in March 1994.

Mr McKenna denies negligence and contends that Mr Gates' illness was not caused by being hypnotised.

The hearing resumes when expert medical evidence will be held.

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JULY 23 1998

Wartime papers: SOE documents reveal Whitehall's 1944 plans for the assassination that never was

Secret British plot to kill Hitler

BY JOHN CROSSLAND

BRITISH AGENTS secretly plotted to kill Adolf Hitler during the final months of the Second World War, according to papers made public yesterday.

A detailed 126-page dossier, approved by Sir Winston Churchill, the wartime prime minister, set out options for assassination methods ranging from a lone sniper attack to an all-out airborne assault by SAS paratroopers on the Nazi dictator's mountain hideaway.

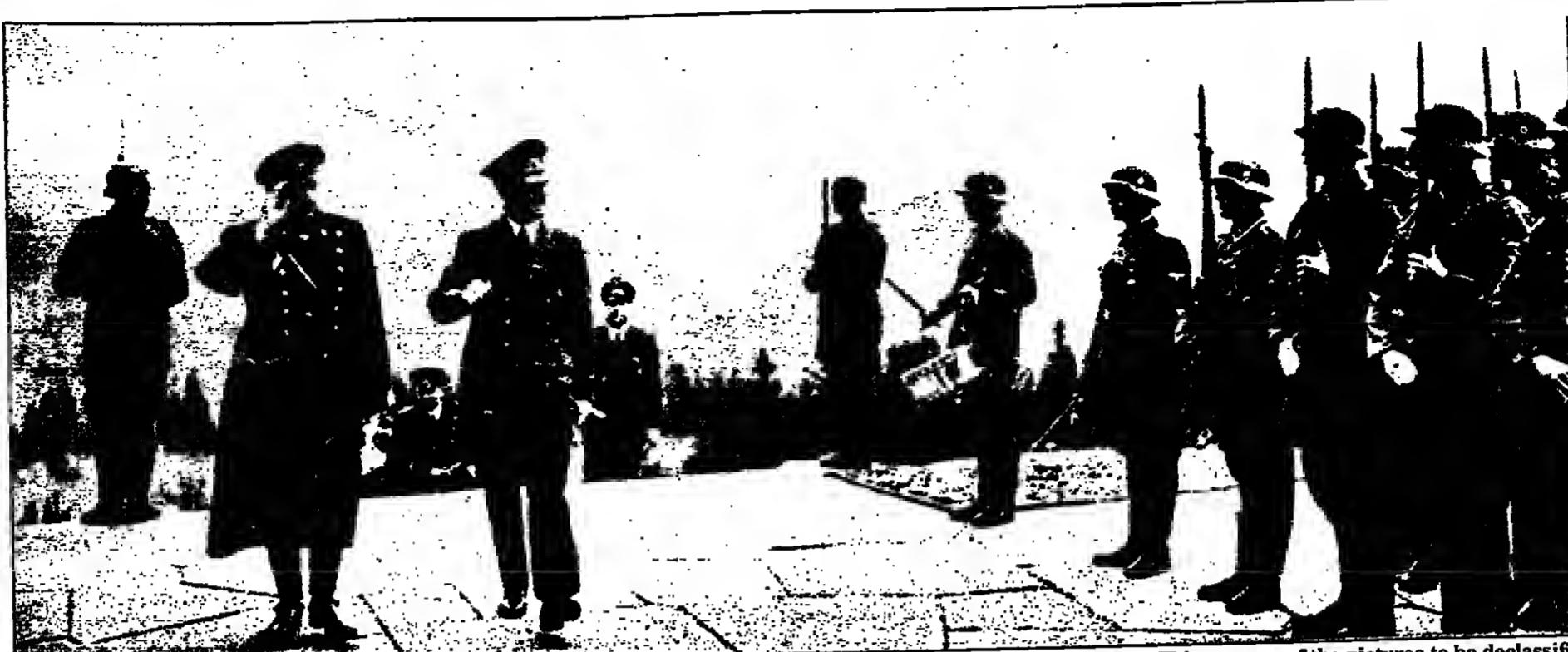
The report, drawn up by the Special Operations Executive, the wartime secret service department responsible for operations behind enemy lines, reads like an extract from a best-selling novel. It was among 1,000 top secret files released by the Government yesterday from the Public Records Office, Kew.

According to files on "Operation Foxley", Churchill was personally informed that the defence Chiefs of Staff had given their blessings to the project.

Before the war ended they had even identified and approached a potential assassin to carry out the hit. Captain Edmund Hailey Bennett, from Stockport, was prepared to stalk Hitler on one of his lonely morning walks in the grounds of his Berchtesgarten headquarters and pick him off with a sniper's rifle.

But the plan was bitterly opposed by some senior figures in the SOE who believed that Hitler's capacity for strategic blunders meant he was more use alive.

Operation Foxley was devised after a bizarre telegram from SOE's office in Algiers on



The SS forms a Guard of Honour at Berghof for Adolf Hitler and King Boris III of Bulgaria, an admirer of the Germans. This was one of the pictures to be declassified

19 June 1944, saying a source had put up an immediate project for killing Hitler. Clearance came from the Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, and a cable was sent to Churchill informing him.

In the event the plan, based on a tip-off from a French colonel that Hitler was staying at a chateau near Perpignan, came to nothing. However it planted the germ of an idea in the mind of the head of SOE,

Major General Colin Gubbins, who decided to form a "group" to co-ordinate attempts to "liquidate" the Führer.

Summoning his senior staff officers to a meeting in Room 312 of the War Office on 24 June, he told them that they would need to find out Hitler's whereabouts and then work out a way to "deal with him".

"At some time or other in the near future Hitler must in any case disappear from the scene, even if we should not be the direct agents for his elimination, and we can at least prepare such action to be taken on his disappearance as will contribute best towards the situation most favourable to the Allied nations," he noted.

It was decided that they would start work on Operation Foxley forthwith and a reluctant "C" - the head of MI6, Stewart Menzies - was approached for help. "I cannot say he was exactly enthusiastic or optimistic," Gubbins noted.

This lack of enthusiasm extended to elements of SOE, some of whom were deeply opposed. The head of the German section, Major Field-Robertson, argued passionately against such an attempt.

He warned that the Germans would "canonise" Hitler as a martyr, while it would be

"disastrous" for the Allies if it was believed they had to resort to these "low methods" because they were unable to defeat the German military machine.

The opposing viewpoint was put by SOE's air adviser, Air Vice Marshal AP Ritchie, who said Hitler was held to be "something more than human" by a large section of the German population. "Remove Hitler and there is nothing left."

It was this view that held and by late 1944, a file was prepared on a possible assassination at-

tempt. The dossier contained exhaustive details of habits and movements of Hitler and his entourage - down to the time of his morning walk and the way he drank his tea.

There were dozens of photographs and maps of the area around Berchtesgarten, his hideaway in the Bavarian Alps, and plans of his personal train, the Führerzug.

However, there was little detailed military planning, with only the outline of three basic options: a sniper attack, derailment of the Führer's train with explosives or an aerial

bombard of Berchtesgarten while an SAS battalion was parachuted in to mop up the 260 or so defenders and kill Hitler.

If none of those appealed, they could always resort to poisoning the Führerzug's water supply or impregnating his clothing with a lethal

hazardous substance.

By spring 1945, things were sufficiently advanced for the question of who the killer should be. But the War in Europe was by now in its closing stages and a little over a month later Hitler was dead by his own hand.

Concerns about wrongdoing

- including drunken, £50-a-head working lunches and trips to China and Hong Kong - were reported in *The Independent* as early as February last year. Four other councillors

are under arrest.

Yesterday Doncaster magistrates heard that Riley, from Rossington, near Doncaster, put in two claims for first-class travel to attend a conference when he had travelled standard class. He claimed mileage for a journey on which he had been driven by a council driver.

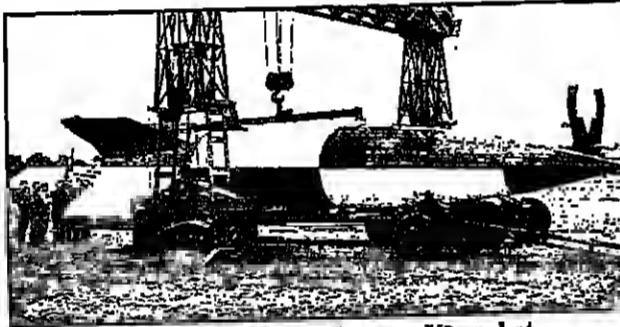
His solicitor, Paul Bullen, said Riley was thoroughly ashamed of his actions and had already paid the money back to the council. He said he had served the community for more than 20 years and his reputation was now at "rock bottom".

"He has served as a parish councillor and school governor and has been involved with miners' welfare, youth clubs, and other local causes over the years," he said. "He has probably put in more hours for the community per week than a lot of people do in their full-time jobs."

The stipendiary magistrate Neville White said: "This is a tragedy for you and for your family, but you were elected by the residents of your ward and you used the office they had given you to steal their money by fiddling your accounts."

"People have got to be able to trust their representatives. The fact that it was only £214 is not the point. It's the fact that you betrayed the trust that is important. I'm afraid imprisonment is unavoidable."

V2 sabotage plan ended in farce



British scientists inspect a German V2 rocket

AT THE height of Hitler's V-rocket offensive in the winter of 1944, when nearly 3,000 of the missiles were raining down on southern England, the SOE parachuted an agent into Germany to blow up the Berlin factory which produced the weapons' height and range setting controls.

But the SOE files released yesterday show the mission ended in farce and almost cost the agent his life.

Second Lt Robert Baker-Byrne, recently promoted from Sergeant, had lived in Germany before the war and was fluent in the language. Yet following his night-time drop in November 1944, he quickly found himself in trouble.

He broke his compass on landing, and his shabby disguise as a French slave-labourer working for the Nazis' Todt Organisation was totally

at variance with the smart uniforms that were still the norm in Hitler's Germany.

"He realises now that he was very lucky to survive and return safely when his uniform, papers and cover story were all inadequate," his debriefing report said.

Worse was to come. When he reached Berlin he was spotted by a plain-clothes

detective who recognised him from his time in the city before the war. The German, said to resemble a hippopotamus, began following Baker-Byrne, only for the agent to lose him at the railway station.

After that scare the Briton decided to lie low in a cinema before carrying out his attack on the plant. He emerged during the cover of an Allied

air raid, and made his way to the factory. But he was spotted by some women who raised the alarm, at which point two policemen appeared.

"Source Baker-Byrne could have killed the two

policemen but he realised it would take at least ten minutes to pick the three locks and prepare his charges, by which time the alarm would most certainly have been raised," the debriefing note said.

By now he had decided that the job could not be done single-handedly, and made his escape. "There were some heaps of debris on the pavement, and there were plenty of people about, so he was easily able to avoid two shots which were fired after him," according to the debriefing note.

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ATTEMPTING insight into the workings of the SOE's Black Propaganda Unit is revealed in the files released yesterday.

Headed "Adults Only", one file details with lascivious pleasure the sexual peccadilloes of leading Nazis. The report was compiled as part of the SoE's strategy to wreak havoc behind enemy lines.

Some of it is based on little more than gossip but purports to shed light on a regime whose leaders seemingly suffered from insatiable libido. Although little documentary proof was offered, it contains allegations which went to the very top.

Foremost was the Munich-based Nazi Party chief Christian Weber. "This old party boy from Munich is well known for his orgies," says the report.

The report cites the case of Admiral Conrad Albrecht, a 60-year-old "whose age makes him principally a voyeur".

"His speciality is to go to low pubs in Kiel where he takes up a bunch of really sex-starved U-boat men who are taken by limousine after a hearty meal with schnapps to the establishment of Miss Freybe. Miss Freybe prefers to wear nothing but a transparent raincoat. She is reputed to be the Admiral's Mistress."

The file mentions the original Rick's Bar of the film Casablanca which was really the Bodega bar frequented by Theodor Auer, the German Consul General, who conducted flagrant homosexual affairs and was thinly disguised in the film.

He was credited with having been surprised at one of his festivals by a member of the Wehrmacht. "A particular attraction this time was a large roulette wheel on which a naked girl was strapped. Christian Weber, drunk as usual, was acting as croupier and set the table in motion. The audience sat at the ready round the table. The gentleman opposite the girl when the wheel stops then obliges. By the time the Wehrmacht Lt arrived the girl was unconscious."

How long does it take to catch the Devil?

CIVIL DAYS

Donald Harstad

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Asian states blame Japan for turmoil

ASIAN FOREIGN ministers meet in the Philippines this week in an atmosphere of economic crisis, political uncertainty and growing recrimination toward Japan.

Foreign ministers from the nine countries of Asian Association of South-East Asian Nations, including Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand, will begin formal deliberations on Friday after the region's most difficult year since the Second World War.

The worsening economic situation, the ongoing turmoil in Indonesia, the region's smog problem and the recent nuclear tests in South Asia are threatening to trigger public disagreement in a group which has always prided itself on its united, harmonious exterior.

Behind the scenes, a disagreement is brewing between Asean members and Japan over a draft statement which blames Tokyo for the region's continuing economic crisis.

In uncharacteristically impatient language, the draft urges the Japanese to carry out reforms they have promised to their financial and tax system. It bluntly states that the weakness of the Japanese yen is undermining South East Asian efforts to rebuild their economies.

Japan has become increasingly touchy about such criticisms. Asean has always operated a strict policy of "non-interference", refusing to com-

BY RICHARD LLOYD PARRY
in Manila

ment on the domestic affairs of other states. But the catastrophes of the last year have undermined this principle.

In large part, the point of policy was to protect authoritarian states such as Indonesia and Malaysia from criticism on human rights grounds. The events of the last year, however, have demonstrated the degree to which problems in one country can spill over into its neighbours.

Forest fires in Indonesia created choking smog, which brought human suffering and disrupted transport throughout the region. Governments in Singapore, Malaysia and the Philippines were outraged, but Asean protocol made it difficult to register a frank protest.

When the repressive government of Burma was admitted as member last year, it was argued that Asean's policy of discreet engagement behind the scenes would work more effectively than the public criticism and the sanctions. But in the last year the Burmese junta in Rangoon has been just as intransigent and repressive.

This year, Asean's two most democratic members, Thailand and the Philippines, are pressing for a revision of the policy.

"Times have changed," said the meeting's chairman, Domingo Siazon, the Filipino,

Interest rates go up.



Cambodians ride a moto-taxi to work in Phnom Penh. Recession is biting and hopes are high that a trouble-free election will kick-start its economy but investors from crisis-hit Asia are unlikely to help whatever happens, economists said

Patrick de Noirmont/Reuters

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Tokyo's rising star gets thumbs down

BY RICHARD LLOYD PARRY



Keizo Obuchi: Yen sank at news of his chances

WITH ONE day to go before Japan's ruling party selects the next prime minister, polls indicate that the man the public wants least - the Foreign Minister, Keizo Obuchi - is most likely to take the job.

Three separate surveys published yesterday all indicated that Mr Obuchi would be elected as president of the Liberal Democratic Party tomorrow by secret ballot of its MPs and regional delegates.

Despite its humiliating defeat in elections to the upper house 11 days ago, the LDP has a majority in the lower house which will select a new prime minister at the end of the month.

The immensity of an Obuchi victory provoked selling in the stock exchange and currency markets, where he is regarded as a colourless and vacuous character who is unlikely to provide the dynamic leadership Japan needs to steer it through its economic crisis. The yen sank to more than 140 to the dollar in late trading in Tokyo, and the Nikkei stock average sank 263 points to 16,293.

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Interest rates go down.

Suharto spurns \$2m retirement home

THE FORMER Indonesian president, Suharto, has asked the country's cash-strapped government to postpone its plans to build him a \$2m (£1.2m) mansion as a retirement gift, officials said yesterday.

The State Secretary, Akbar Tarung, said Mr Suharto felt "it would be better for the government to concentrate on fixing the economic crisis rather than giving me a house."

The former leader insisted that if the government had gone ahead with the gift he would have donated the money to the poor and struggling farmers. The minister met the ex-president after controversy erupted among legislators over the retirement house plan.

Opponents of the former

president blame him for Indonesia's economic crisis and have accused him of enriching his family during more than three decades in office. Mr Akbar said Mr Suharto's successor, President BJ Habibie, "highly respected" Mr Suharto's decision.

In a further gesture towards political reform, President Habibie yesterday announced that Indonesia would establish an independent commission on violence against women, to investigate alleged rape cases during the riots in May which led to Mr Suharto's fall.

Several women's groups have said more than 160 women were raped during the protests which helped to force Mr Suharto to resign.

ANDREW MARSHALL

Washington is littered with bitter, frustrated people who have failed to appreciate Bill Clinton's sheer ability to survive

— THE THURSDAY REVIEW, PAGE 5 →

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Searching for the last Western hostage

NOT LONG before his death in 1986, French hostage Michael Seurat was allowed out of captivity.

Accompanied by an Amal official called Ali Hamdan, he was permitted to visit his Beirut home, to embrace his young wife and play with his children and to choose some books from his library to read back in captivity.

It was the last time his family was ever to see him. Alone and in misery, he died of cancer only months later, despite the efforts of an imprisoned Lebanese Jewish doctor who was himself never seen again.

I know Hamdan. Unconnected with the original kidnapping, he lives now in west Africa. I last saw him at the duty free shop at Beirut airport a few weeks ago.

Not long after Seurat's death, I met Imad Mugniéh, the kidnapper whose captives included Terry Waite and John McCarthy, Brian Keenan and Terry Anderson - the longest-held Western hostage who spent almost seven years in captivity - as well as Seurat.

Mugniéh's family still lives in Beirut. Two years ago, a bomb intended for him killed his brother - a Lebanese was sentenced as an Israeli agent and hanged for the murder.

I later met the family of the Jewish doctor; his son convinced that his father was no longer alive, his wife Rachel still refusing to believe her husband was dead.

Waite, McCarthy, Keenan and Anderson were released. Even dead hostages returned home.

The bones of CIA agent William Buckley, tortured to death in captivity, were dug up in Beirut's southern suburbs and handed over to the Americans. US Colonel William Higgins, a UN officer hanged, so his kidnappers said, in retaliation for the Israeli abduction of a Lebanese cleric called Abdul Karim Obeid, was eventually buried at Arlington.

But Seurat, like the Jewish doctor and 17,000 other Lebanese hostages, vanished. Even today, Lebanon has many secret graves.

Seurat's wife Marie, who was born in the Syrian city of Aleppo, has never maintained the silence that diplomats would have preferred.

For 12 years, she has demanded, from the French government, from the Lebanese and Syrians and Americans and British and Israelis, to know why she cannot lay flowers at her husband's tomb.

Once, long ago, Muslim militiamen took her to a grave in west Beirut and insisted that her husband's remains lay beneath.

She recalled her terrible journey in a book, *The Crows of Aleppo*. Why, she asked,

BY ROBERT FISK
in Beirut

Did the French think that they could ignore Marie because she was born in Syria? Or because her husband was not a diplomat? Or because the search for Michel Seurat would have opened wounds which Lebanon and Syria, both now courted by President Jacques Chirac and the French government, would prefer remained closed?

Was it, Marie Seurat asked, "because I was going to forget what is perhaps most important of all - that the body of a dead Frenchman in the service of his country has a price?"

Her campaign has been as brave as her courageous husband would have wished.

For, of all the Western hostage, Seurat was a tragic hero, unwilling to inflict his last days on his fellow captives and asking only for a room in which he could die on his own.

In his own separate prison - along with his fellow hostage Tom Sutherland - Terry Anderson read the diary of the Jewish doctor who tried to save Seurat, and which was addressed to his son.

"He was kidnapped by some other group, then apparently borrowed by our hosts to treat ... Michael Seurat. It's an emotional, magnificently written thing that makes me almost ashamed to be reading it. But we don't stop, Tom and I, poring over the beautiful French by candlelight, late into the night."

"First, the doctor says he knows Seurat is terribly ill. He's not sure from what, and bemoans his lack of instruments and ability to test, but indicates he thinks it's some form of cancer, possibly of the liver or pancreas, and probably fatal. Nothing he can do here, and no chance of getting any outside help."

Seurat's captors announced his death on 10 March, 1986, releasing three photographs of his body but no indication of where it might be found.

Lebanese officials now speak of "great co-operation between all parties involved in the hostage issue", which is Levantpeak for Iran, the Hezbollah, the Lebanese government, France and probably Syria.

Given the Arab desire to use France as a balance to Washington's crippled role as honest broker in the Middle East "peace process", there is reason for this co-operation. Perhaps Michel Seurat will at last go home.

But not the Jewish doctor whose name, needless to say, is largely forgotten in the West, even though his family - like Michael Seurat's - now lives in France.

He was called Elie Hallak

and, like almost all the 17,000 other Lebanese hostages - again, ignored in the West - he was a truly innocent man.

His son never received the diary his father wrote for him.



French hostage Michel Seurat was declared dead by his abductors in March 1986



Marie Seurat displaying a picture of her husband. Yesterday two mechanical diggers guarded by 30 police excavated beside the road to Beirut's International Airport in the search for his remains AFP

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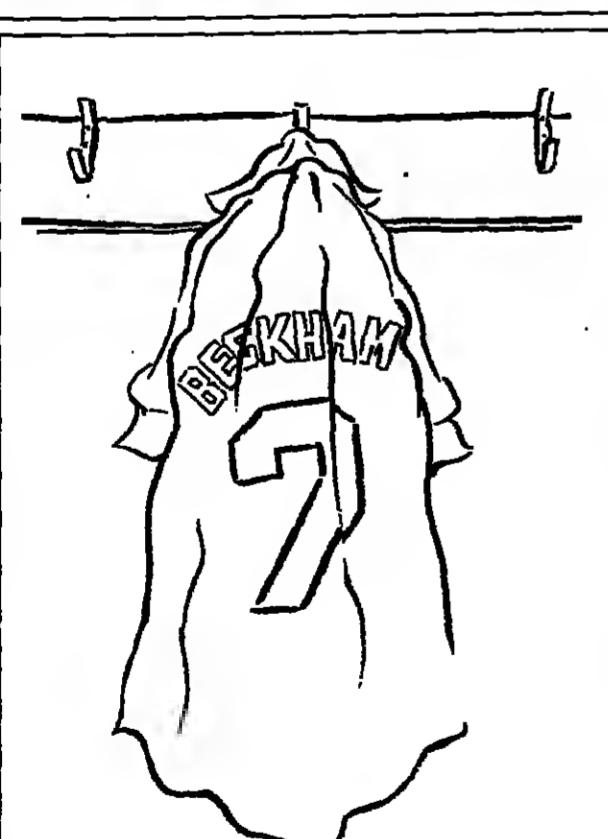
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BUSINESS

BRIEFING

ISA benchmarking 'misleading'

TREASURY PROPOSALS to "benchmark" its new Individual Savings Accounts (ISAs) were yesterday criticised by a leading consumer group as being potentially misleading for inexperienced investors. The National Consumer Council (NCC) also said tax benefits available through the new ISA would not encourage less well-off people to save more because the relief would mean little to those who are too poor to pay tax.

The ISA, to be introduced in April 1999, will replace PEPs and Tessas. To help consumers in their choice of ISA, the Treasury is proposing to benchmark those it judges are suitable because they are the least complicated and offer the best value. The standard will be known as a CATmark, standing for costs, accessibility and fair terms.

Competition hits Medeva profits

SHARES IN Medeva slid yesterday after competition to its biggest-selling drug semi-first-half profits tumbling. Pre-tax profits dropped 20 per cent to £36.7m, worse than analysts had predicted, while sales dropped 5 per cent to £148.3m.

The market, which had been braced for bad news on Methylphenidate, which is used to treat hyperactivity, marked Medeva shares down 8.5 per cent, or 14.5p, to a five-month low of 157p.

Meanwhile, shares in Peptide Therapeutics slumped almost 23 per cent to 157.5p after it disclosed disappointing results from early trials of a new flu vaccine.

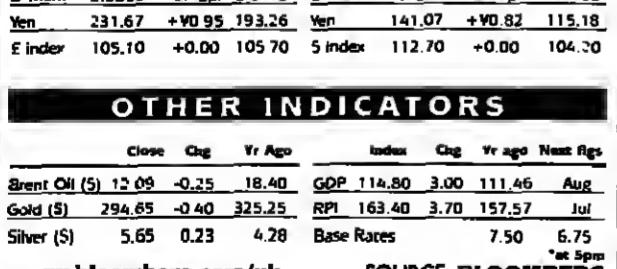
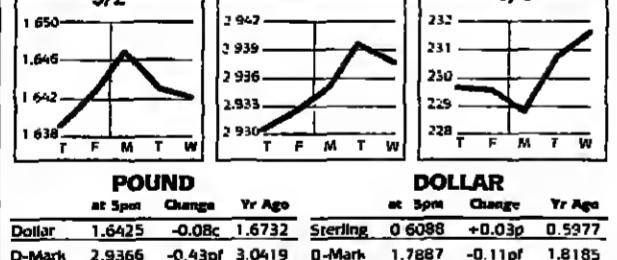
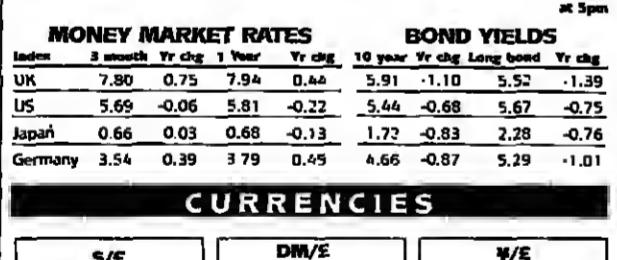
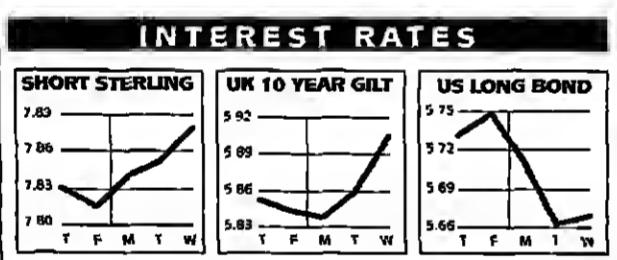
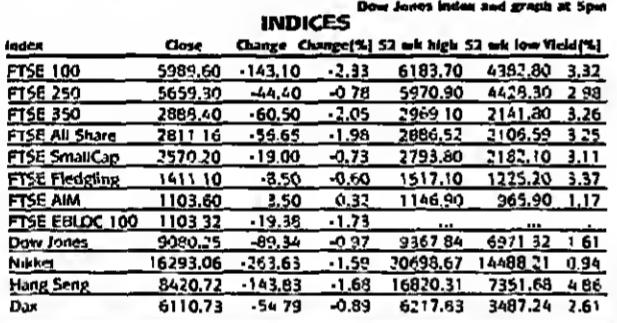
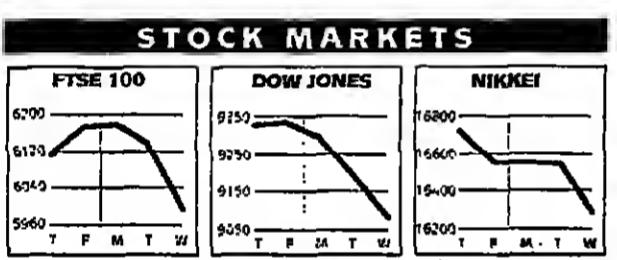
*Peptide report, page 19;
Medeva, investment column, page 21*

Nursing home firm raises £88m

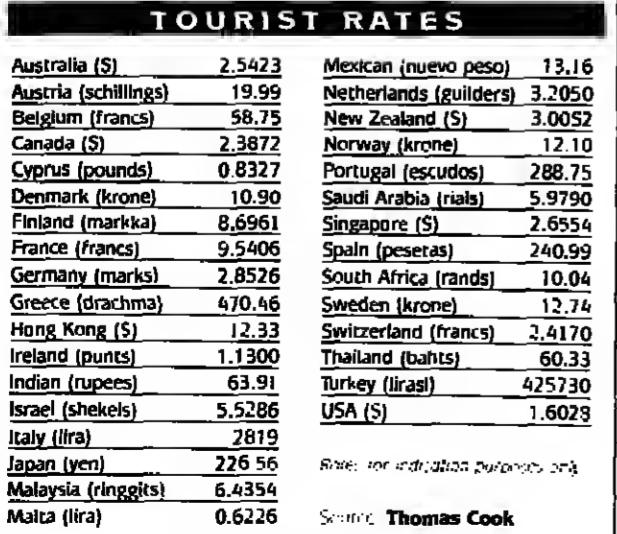
NURSING HOME Properties is raising £88m via a placing and open offer to help fund further sale and leaseback deals.

The company has also announced plans to move up to the official list and to change its name to NHP. The placing and open offer is priced at 149p per share on a two-for-three basis.

The shares closed unchanged at 160p yesterday. NHP says it has agreed sale and leaseback deals on nursing homes worth £100m.



www.bloomberg.com/uk SOURCE: BLOOMBERG



www.bloomberg.com/uk SOURCE: Thomas Cook

Broker Willis Corroon falls to £851m US buyout

BY ANDREW VERTIY

WILLIS CORROON, the struggling insurance broker, yesterday bought itself an £851m reprieve from the threat of takeover in a deal that took the

commissions were continually paid to a merger. Guardian Royal Exchange and Royal & Sun Alliance are backing the deal along with Travelers Property Casualty, Hartford Financial Services and Chubb. They will take a 19 per cent stake while KKR funds the rest.

The deal buys time for John Reeve, executive chairman of Willis Corroon, who was under increasing pressure from shareholders over his perceived failure to make an impact on the group's earnings prospects. Mr Reeve joined the group from Sun Life over three years ago after Sun Life was largely

bought-out by Liberty Life, the South African insurer, and UAP, the French insurance group.

He has been adamantly opposed to a merger despite mounting demands in the City for him to make a bold strategic move. Discontented shareholders such as PFDM, which has held a stake of nearly 20 per cent in the group, have already committed themselves to the 200p offer, which gives them a 12 per cent premium on the shares' closing price on Tuesday of 178.5.

The deal is less than the group's value in 1993 when it peaked at 240p. But speculation

has driven shares up since the beginning of July.

Willis Corroon said yesterday that a big reason for the deal was to escape the demands of the City. "There's been a lot of speculation regarding the stability of ownership. It's made operating quite difficult," said a spokesman.

The group has also been hit by criticism from commercial customers over "commission overrides" - extra payments from insurance companies in exchange for bringing in greater volumes of business.

Some customers have alleged this created a conflict of

interest in an insurance broker when it decides which insurance company to use.

Industry observers were yesterday doubtful the deal would help to turn the business around. Peter Mynors, of Coopers & Lybrand's insurance practice, said: "The deal doesn't, I think, solve the basic problem of where Willis Corroon

is going." The deal makes Sedgwick Group, Willis Corroon's arch-rival, much more vulnerable to a bid from the US insurance giants, whose options for acquisitions are now running out.

Outlook, page 17



Sports retailers tee up merger

BY NIGEL COPE
Associate City Editor

BRITAIN'S FRAGILE sports retailing market could soon be dominated by a new force after JJB Sports revealed it is in talks with Sports Division that could lead to a merger.

Shares in JJB

Nationwide two, carpetbaggers nil

Out

NATIONWIDE HAS again seen off the pantomime horse of Michael Hardman and Andrew Muir. But thanks to the misguided intervention of the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Helen Liddell, it looks like the carpetbaggers will be back next year to see if they can make it third time lucky.

On then, to today's more crucial vote to decide whether the society's 4.9 million members actually want to convert to a bank as opposed merely to having an ex-banker with a greedy eye on the board.

The improvement in the carpetbaggers' share of the vote, from 30 per cent last year to 40 per cent this time, makes it a perilously hard one to call. But if the Nationwide's members vote as they ought to, then it will see off the threat.

Technically, the carpetbaggers have not raised the necessary quorum since less than 50 per cent of the society's members have voted in the conversion ballot. But the reality is that a simple majority in favour of conversion among those who have voted will make it impossible for Nationwide to resist the stampede that will emerge.

Meanwhile, Mrs Liddell has got in a muddle, deciding that Nationwide does not deserve any more protection



OUTLOOK

because its chief executive earns too much. Members might think Brian Davis earned his £435,000 last year. But because of Mrs Liddell's inability to differentiate between a silly squabble over pay and the bigger issue of the survival of mutuality, Nationwide will probably have to go through the whole expensive process again next year, even if it escapes today.

Last chance for Willis Corroon

JOHN REEVE of Willis Corroon calls it a platform for growth. Others may interpret it as a last-ditch and high-

risk attempt to save his own skin. Britain's number-two insurance broker has been such a perennial bid target it is surprising it has taken this long to fall into the arms of another.

The group has suffered from a familiar squeeze. Increased competition has meant reduced premium rates, lower commissions and ever-thinner margins, and a subsequent dash among the main players to consolidate. Willis Corroon tried to keep its way out with a spot of consolidation of its own. But the merger of Willis Faber and Corroon & Black in 1990 failed to do the trick. Since then it has been a downhill slog characterised by a dismal earnings and share price performance and increasingly restive shareholders. Penalties mis-selling provisions have scarcely helped sentiment.

Now however, life will be different in the warm embrace of the legendary Wall Street buy-out specialists Kohlberg Kravis Roberts. The constant bid speculation that accompanied a public listing was unsettling for staff and unhelpful when pitching for new business. The treadmill of quarterly reporting cramped its room for manoeuvre.

How much easier it will be to invest for the future and turn the group

from a bog-standard insurance business into a provider of advice and solutions for grateful fee-paying clients now that Willis Corroon is going private.

That at any rate, is the theory. Having examined the options - remaining public, merging or forging a strategic alliance - it is one that the executive chairman and his six fellow directors have bought into. They are cashing in their £3m stake in Willis Corroon and, along with other senior managers, buying a 15 per cent share in the bid vehicle, Trinity Acquisition for £10m.

Other shareholders will probably do likewise. Indeed the biggest PDMF with 19 per cent, has already snapped KKR's hand off.

To provide some ballast, five insurers, led by Guardian Royal Exchange and Royal and Sun Alliance are taking a 20 per cent stake. Willis says it is not banking on an upturn in the cycle and firm insurance rates to make life easier. But unlike its rivals, Aon, Marsh & McLennan and Sedgwick, it does not have a life business, fund management arm or employee benefits division to fall back on.

Given the size of KKR's portfolio (\$81bn), an £85m punt on Willis is not

going to break the bank. But for Mr Reeve and Co this is the last chance saloon. Also supposing a rival bidder does not step in and spoil the party.

Takeover Panel takes its time

NEVER LET IT BE said that the Takeover Panel rushes to judgement. After all, its 18 members (17 men and one token woman) are busy individuals in their own right and the matters which come before them deserve careful deliberation. Even by the Panel's glacial standards, however, it seems extraordinary that it should take 18 months in one case and over four years in another to eradicate two of the more questionable tactics used by City advisers during contested bids.

Henceforth the Takeover Code is being amended to prevent advisers to bid targets from buying shares in their client and then voting them as part of the defence. This tactic was used most controversially by BZW during the defence of Northern Electric against CalEnergy in 1996. It was roundly and rightly criticised because the interests of fee-hungry advisers

are often not synonymous with those of other investors.

The other rule change will prevent advisers who have made all-paper bids from buying out selected shareholders for cash at preferential prices. The old rules allowed an all-share bidder to snap up 10 per cent of the target for cash at the "see-through" price - the theoretic (in some cases very theoretic) value of the paper on offer. From now on all shareholders will have to be offered the same cash price.

The last time this tactic was employed in a high-profile contested bid was when Enterprise Oil, advised by Warburgs, attempted to take over Lasmo and, by chance, just happened to snap up a 9 per cent stake from PDMF for cash.

In the event the bid tactics failed on each occasion. Northern fell to CalEnergy after BZW belatedly received a £200,000 success fee from its client and the Panel decided to extend the offer period.

In the case of Enterprise/Lasmo, the defeat was all the more resounding. Warburgs failing to reach 50 per cent by a country mile, even with the PDMF stake in its back pocket.

The two events are history in more than just the literal sense, since BZW and Warburgs no longer exist in their own right. Warburgs has been swallowed twice in a Swiss roll. Meanwhile BZW, by one of those ironic little twists, is now part of CSEB, the bank that advised CalEnergy.

The fact that such tactics are comparatively rare (who can remember the last hostile all-paper bid) hardly excuses the Panel's tardiness. What is more, it has failed to use this latest exercise in good housekeeping to stop another City tactic that is long overdue for the chop. That is the "creep provision" which allows one company with a large minority stake to take slow control of another without ever paying a takeover premium. The last bidder to exploit this was Emerson Electric of the US, which generously offered shareholders in Astec (BSR) the choice between being bought at the current market price or watching as the dividend was slashed.

On current form the Panel will get around to acting sometime next year. Meanwhile Emerson's advisers, which include Cazevoe and Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, might care to reflect on the hand history has dealt others in the past.

IN BRIEF

Power prices may all by a quarter

Wholesale electricity prices could drop by around 25 per cent if the present trading arrangement known as the "pool" is converted into a competitive market, according to the industrial lobby Utility Buyers Forum.

"The figure is based on independent analysis of what ought to happen if the pool becomes a clearing house," chairman Peter Rost said. The electricity regulator's director general, Stephen Littlechild, is due to release a final report by the end of the month on changes to the pool, which buyers describe as a *de facto* pricing cartel.

Uno profit at £5m

Uno, the furniture group, shrugged off the high street woes yesterday with a 76 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £5m including the first full-year contribution from the World of Leather stores. Like-for-like sales are down by 5 per cent in current trading but this compares with a 22 per cent rise last year when sales were inflated by building society windfalls. "The market is difficult but we are performing well," said Paul Rosenblatt Uno's chairman and chief executive.

Atkins' £120m win

WS Atkins, which provides consultancy and support services, has won a £120m contract from the Government. The contract calls for the management of nearly 1,000 Employment Service properties through to 2002 and may be extended for a further four years, the company said.

IPE open all hours

The board of the International Petroleum Exchange (IPE), the world's second-largest energy forum, voted on Tuesday to invest about £250,000 on developing out-of-hours electronic trading funds to form alliances with other exchanges and to reorganise the trading floor to accommodate a 50 per cent increase in the size of the Brent pit, the IPE's flagship contract.

Yesterday's announcement comes amid discussions between the board of the IPE and the New York Mercantile Exchange, the world's largest exchange, to form a full-scale strategic alliance.

CWC's 1.5m users

Cable and Wireless Communications said on Wednesday that more than 1.15 million customers were now directly connected to its services. Reporting second-quarter operating statistics, CWC said telephone-line penetration rose to 25.3 per cent from 22.6 per cent with cable-television penetration up to 20.4 per cent from 19.1 per cent in the first quarter of 1997/98.

However, churn - the number of customers dropping services - rose to 23 per cent for consumer telephony and 28.6 per cent for cable TV services, the highest levels for over a year.

Reuters needs to win on-line war

News Analysis: The Internet is the latest in a series of challenges for the financial information provider

BY PETER THAL LARSEN

Processing, a US supplier of equity information.

Although market share statistics are hard to come by, Reuters puts its own share of the market at 32 per cent, with Bloomberg and Bridge both on 9 per cent. These three are the only companies who can credibly offer feeds of real-time financial information, news and analytical tools to traders and bankers around the world.

"With the globalisation of the financial markets it is only the very largest data vendors who are able to continually invest in the required global communication systems and associated technology," says Stephen Kimsey, a consultant who conducts an annual survey of dealing rooms.

The problem, however, is that the dealing room market is fairly saturated. Although information providers are forever adding new features to their terminals, they have to do this to hang on to their existing market share.

These factors were all evident in Reuters' first-half results, released yesterday. In the six months to June sales rose just 3 per cent to £145m, although this was partly down to the stronger pound. Pre-tax profits actually slipped 3 per cent to £294m.

Investors seem relatively sanguine about these short-term factors: yesterday Reuters' shares rose 1.5p to 632.5p in a falling market.

But in the background there is a longer-term question hanging over Reuters and its competitors: Who is going to emerge victorious in the battle to be the premier on-line financial information provider? And, more significantly, will the rise of the Internet undermine all their plans?

The battle for supremacy in the on-line information market - estimated to be worth at least £3.5bn - has been intense in the past few years. The market has concentrated around three global players: Reuters, Bloomberg and Bridge Information Systems, the latter a fast-growing systems, the latter a fast-growing group which has vaulted itself into major league by buying up Dow Jones' Teletext information service and Automatic Data

Henderson Crosthwaite, the stockbrokers.

The question investors are increasingly asking, however, is whether the availability of cheap information on the Internet will undermine that market. The World Wide Web is littered with sites offering financial news and delayed stock quotes for free. Others, like the *Wall Street Journal*, charge \$50 a year for access to a site which offers the entire text of the US financial newspaper and access to a raft of analytical and historical information.

Clearly, these services will never be good enough for dealers who need to be informed of price movements in share prices. But they may well encroach in areas where the need for up-to-the-minute information is less pressing.

Reuters sees the Internet as an opportunity to distribute information more cheaply. The

company already uses Internet standards to transmit its information, albeit mostly over a private network. "People are worried but the fact is that the Internet allows us to get broader distribution for our products," says Rob Rowley, Reuters' finance director.

The company is also keeping its finger in the pie by supplying news and prices to over 100 websites.

The worry, however, is that on-line financial data and news will increasingly become a commodity product, and that users will become increasing

ly indifferent about where their data comes from - thereby forcing down prices.

On-line information providers hope to resist the trend by adding ever more sophisticated analytical tools. "It is relatively simple to get prices, but to put together his-

torical data and economic data is more complicated," says Parin Kanjiani, managing director of Datastream/ICV, the London-based information provider which is part of Primedia, the US group. "It would cost a new entrant millions if not billions to build that up."

Nevertheless, Internet analysts are asking whether firms like Reuters can continue to be fully vertically-integrated companies producing data, distributing to users and supplying the software tools to manipulate it.

Many users admit that they would rather have access to several major sources of news and data through a single interface on their screens.

So it seems that Reuters, Bloomberg and the rest will continue to battle it out for supremacy. But whether they can convince less sophisticated customers to pay for their information remains to be seen.

Britain leads Europe in share buybacks

BY LEA PATERSON

due to UK firms' greater commitment to the shareholder value philosophy, some is also due to an element of pressure from shareholders to distribute cash, either as dividends or through repurchases.

A study carried out by JP Morgan, the US bank, found that since 1990 about 70 per cent of all European share buyback programmes had taken place in the UK. British share buybacks between 1990 and 1998 had a combined value of more than \$30bn (£18bn), says the bank.

JP Morgan attributed the UK's leadership in buybacks to a combination of company valuations and shareholder pressure. The study found that, in the right conditions, buyback schemes could significantly en-

hance shareholder value. But the bank warned that the stock market tended to react negatively if companies with relatively high levels of debt tried to buy back shares.

"Investors prefer firms to distribute excess cash when the firm has little or no debt. Conversely, when a firm is more leveraged, investors are negatively surprised by ... a share repurchase as it suggests there are no more value-creating investment opportunities," the bank said.

JP Morgan found that European (including UK) share buyback volumes quadrupled since 1995, and the total value of buybacks so far this year was \$15bn.

BNFL wins \$7bn nuclear clean-up contract in US

BRITISH Nuclear Fuels (BNFL)

won a nuclear clean-up contract from the US Department of Energy's storage site at Hanford, Washington, needs to be approved by Congress. It will take 20 years to complete the work.

BNFL's presence in the US market is the largest single nuclear clean-up project in the United States and probably the world, a spokesman said.

The deal underlines the British state-owned company's concerted push to increase overseas business and to ensure it is a major international player on the nuclear stage.

Graham Watts, chairman of the US subsidiary, BNFL Inc, said: "This contract strengthens the company's position in the important US clean-up market." BNFL said technological de-

velopments at its Sellafield reprocessing site in Cumbria had been critical in securing the contract, giving it an edge over possible US contenders.

The deal follows BNFL's 40 per cent role in a \$1.2bn acquisition of the Westinghouse nuclear operations from CBS.

The agreement with US engineering group Morrison Knudsen almost doubled BNFL's size in one fell swoop. Turnover in 1997/1998 is estimated at £1.6bn excluding Westinghouse's turnover of around £1.1bn.

Experts say that if the zero option proposal is adopted it would be impossible for the nuclear industry to comply and nuclear power plants would have to be shut.

environment ministers are meeting to discuss agreements on maritime pollution. Nuclear discharges will be discussed at the meeting and Britain's Environment Minister, Michael Meacher, is putting forward two proposals to limit radioactive waste.

One proposal calls for zero radioactive waste discharges by 2020, and the other calls for discharges to be no more than at naturally occurring background radiation levels.

Experts say that if the zero option proposal is adopted it would be impossible for the nuclear industry to comply and nuclear power plants would have to be shut.

Firms face pressure to take account of pension valuations

COMPANIES FACE having to report fluctuations in the value of their pension schemes and retirement benefit liabilities under proposals issued today by the Accounting Standards Board.

The plan - described as "a monumental change from present practice" by Sir David

BY ROGER TRAPP

Tweedie, the board's chairman - are bound to cause an outcry among accountants and company directors on the grounds that actuarial gains and losses tend to even out over the long term. But the board is convinced that its policy of en-

couraging transparency in company accounts demands such volatility.

To make the proposal work, Sir David and his colleagues suggest a new form of profit and loss account. They say accounts would be easier to understand if profits or losses were split into three headings:

a business's regular activities, or operations; treasury and finance; and "other". Pensions costs would come under "other".

Though the board has consulted with other national accounting standard setters, Sir David is conscious that his group's preferred approach is

revolutionary and therefore hopes that users and preparers of accounts will contribute to the debate. He is particularly anxious to hear views on the suggested changes to the profit and loss account and hence the reporting of financial performance.

The discussion paper, which

also includes recommendations for shifting from actuarial to market valuation of pension scheme assets, follows the publication earlier this year by the International Accounting Standards Committee of a revised standard on employee benefits.

Sir David said: "This is an

immensely difficult subject. But by the same token it is a highly important one: pensions and pension costs have implications for virtually all of us."

The board is also publishing today a statement of best practice on preliminary announcements and proposals for amending the financial report-

ing standard for smaller entities to take account of recent developments. It calls on companies to cover areas such as summarised balance sheets and statements of total recognised gains and losses, urging boards to make greater use of the Internet so that small investors can be put on the same

Spending 'is threat to EMU entry'

THE GOVERNMENT'S new spending plans have jeopardised the UK's chances of entering European Monetary Union (EMU) at a competitive exchange rate, according to one of the country's leading independent think tanks.

In its latest quarterly economic review, the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR) predicts that the recent unexpected increase in public spending will force the Bank of England to keep interest rates higher than they would otherwise have been and, as a result, sterling's fall will be delayed.

NIESR now forecasts that the UK will go into EMU at an exchange rate of DM2.70, rather than the lower rate of DM2.60 that the institute was predicting a few months ago. According to Dr Garry Young, senior researcher at NIESR: "This rate would leave sterling significantly overvalued on EMU entry."

NIESR believes that an exchange rate of DM2.50 to the pound would represent "a sus-

tainable and competitive level".

Dr Young explained that if the UK were to go into EMU at DM2.70, UK companies would only be able to compete effectively with their European rivals if domestic prices fell. He said: "This would inevitably require relatively slow growth in the UK in the early years of the next decade."

NIESR predicts that UK interest rates will go up again next month by another 0.25 points to 7.75 per cent, but believes that this figure will represent the peak of the interest-rate cycle. In its quarterly economic review, the institute says: "We expect interest rates to start falling from the beginning of next year as the absence of any sustained inflationary pressure becomes apparent."

There is a 20 per cent chance of a recession next year, according to NIESR, whose central forecast is that GDP growth will be minimal in the second half of 1998. The economic slowdown will help bring

inflation back towards the Bank of England's target, which NIESR expects will be met during 1999.

Like several other independent think tanks, NIESR is more pessimistic about the outlook for the Government's budget deficit than the Treasury. NIESR predicts that public sector net borrowing will run at more than 1 per cent of GDP over the next three years. The Treasury, by contrast, is forecasting that the Government's books will balance.

Dr Young cautioned that it was very difficult to predict the outcome of the public finances with any degree of accuracy. "Looking a year ahead, the average errors on budget deficit forecasts tend to be around £10bn," he said.

In its latest economic review, NIESR also predicts that the Asian crisis could cut world trade growth by more than a third in 1998. It forecasts that the Japanese economy will contract by 1 per cent this year, prolonging the slump in the worst-affected parts of Asia.

Losers' wheels that could have A&L in a spin

I'M a big fan of Quentin Wilson, the sardonic sidekick of Jeremy Clarkson on the BBC motoring programme, *Top Gear*. However, I fear Alliance & Leicester might have scored an own goal - to mix sporting metaphors - by recruiting Mr Wilson to write a "Used Car Buying Guide" for bank customers.

In the 68-page guide Mr Wilson declares that "some cars will always be losers". His list of "utter sadists" goes:

"Users of incontinence pants drive old Volvos; mobile hairdressers buy Escort convertibles; mostly car thieves drive Escort RS Turbos; Rollers [are] for people with more money than taste; Protons [are] rated only in Bournemouth suburbs; humdrum executive cars are transport for fat reps."

All of which may well be true. But how many of Alliance & Leicester's 5 million-plus customers own such cars? Will there be a Volvo drivers' backlash? Will all those Escort drivers close their accounts with A&L in protest?

A spokesman for the A&L, Paul Lockstone, pooh-poohs such notions. Not surprising, I suppose: Mr Lockstone himself drives a brand-new Saab 95 ("not a company car") which Mr Wilson's guide describes approvingly as "driven by folk who don't cut you up".

Unfortunately Mr Lockstone's Saab is currently "in the garage having its air conditioning repaired". So what car does Peter White, A&L's chief executive, drive, I ask? "I don't know," Mr Lockstone replies diplomatically. A likely tale...

JOHN REDWOOD was under attack again yesterday for his role in a "carpehagging" company, just as Nationwide's escape from the demutualisers was about to be announced.

Mr Redwood, the opposition spokesman for Trade and Industry, came under fire in the House of Commons for being a director of Murray Financial, which was branded a "bandit's trust for demutualisation".

Murray Financial is an acquisition vehicle floated on the AIM last month that seeks to

PEOPLE AND BUSINESS

BY JOHN WILLCOCK



ALMOST 40 per cent of people polled for the Durex Summer Sex Survey say business trips overseas are a prime time for new sexual relationships.

And 27 per cent believe business trips in the UK offer similar opportunities for "casual sexual encounters".

The 1998 NOP survey of 1,343 adults also found that the rugged mountains of Wales are the most popular place for lovers. The Principality's peaks came out on top as the most romantic spot to visit this summer, ahead of Dublin Castle, Sherwood Forest and Blackpool.

Hadrian's Wall proved less popular for a spot of rumpy-pumpy, garnering a limp 1 per cent of the votes.

persuade building societies to vote for demutualisation, in exchange for a stake in the company.

TONY McNULTY, Labour MP for Harrow East, was twice warned by the deputy speaker, Sir Alan Haselhurst, as he criticised Mr Redwood for his role at Murray Financial.

Mr Redwood was not present at the short debate on mutual societies. Mr McNulty said "demutualisers" such as Murray Financial were not there "to serve the interests of current or future savers". He went on: "They are effectively the financial boot boys of the 1990s.

The notion that anyone of the

front bench opposite would have anything to do with them is quite a travesty." The company's plan, he said, was to "asset strip and wreck mutual societies".

Sir Alan then warned Mr McNulty, saying: "You are sailing very close to the wind in your references to Mr Redwood."

Mr McNulty said it was "a pity" that any MP was involved "in such disreputable business", at which Sir Alan warned him again, saying: "You must not by clear implication accuse another member of disreputable behaviour," after which Mr McNulty withdrew his remark. However, he concluded: "If anyone in the corporate sector wants anything to do with demutualisers like Murray Financial, they should think twice."

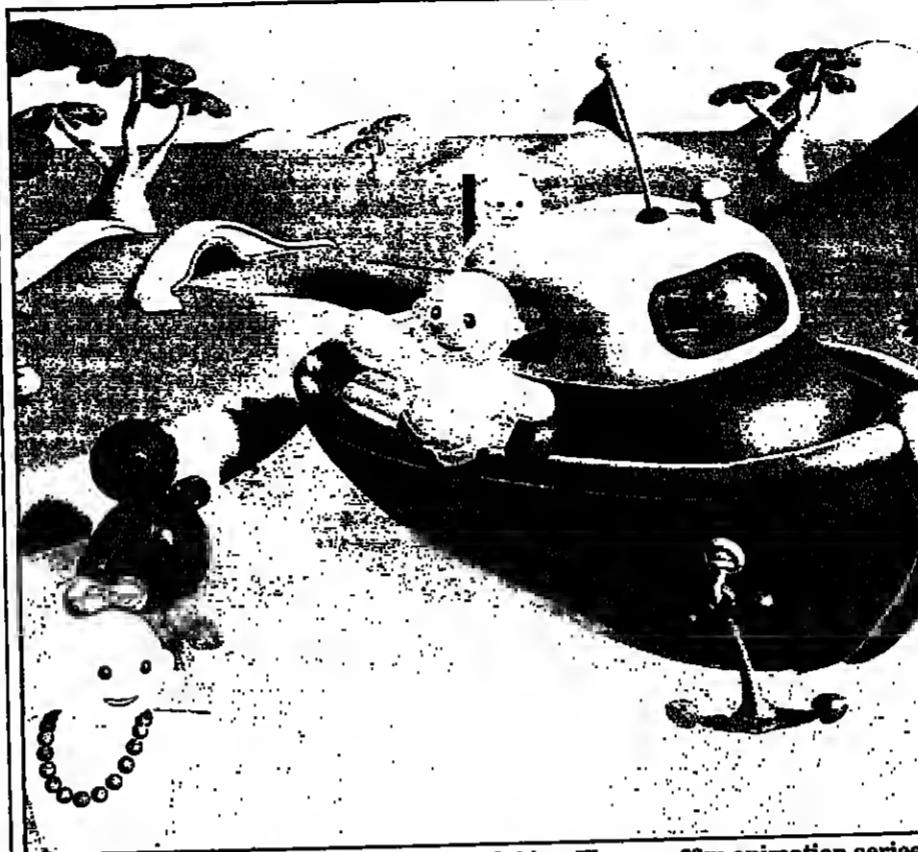
NO ONE awaited yesterday's outcome of the Nationwide vote as keenly as Adrian Coles, director general of the Building Societies Association (BSA) and all-round defender of the mutual faith.

The BSA's own offices are at 3 Savile Row, the same building in London's West End which housed the Beatles' management company Apple in the late 1960s. Mr Coles, noting that Paul McCartney's childhood home in Liverpool has just opened up as a national monument, was relieved there are no plans for a blue plaque or the like on the Savile Row building.

While the occasional guided tour of Beatles fans turns up on the pavement outside, Mr Coles and his colleagues are keen to keep the BSA's offices tourist-free - particularly the roof.

The building, built in the 1730s and leased by the BSA in 1983, was the scene of the Beatles' legendary rooftop performance of "Get Back" featured in the 1969 film *Let It Be*, but Mr Coles says: "There is no sign whatsoever of the Beatles ever having been here."

What a spoilsport. Perhaps Michael Hardwick and the other failed Nationwide "carpehaggers" should now turn their attention to a new campaign: "Free tours of the BSA building".



Watch out Teletubbies, here come the Jellabies. The new £2m animation series, produced by Winchester Television, will be shown on GMTV's main channel and will also help launch its digital service. Winchester shares closed up 2.5p at 72.5p

Trial setback for Peptide flu drug

BY CLIFFORD GERMAN

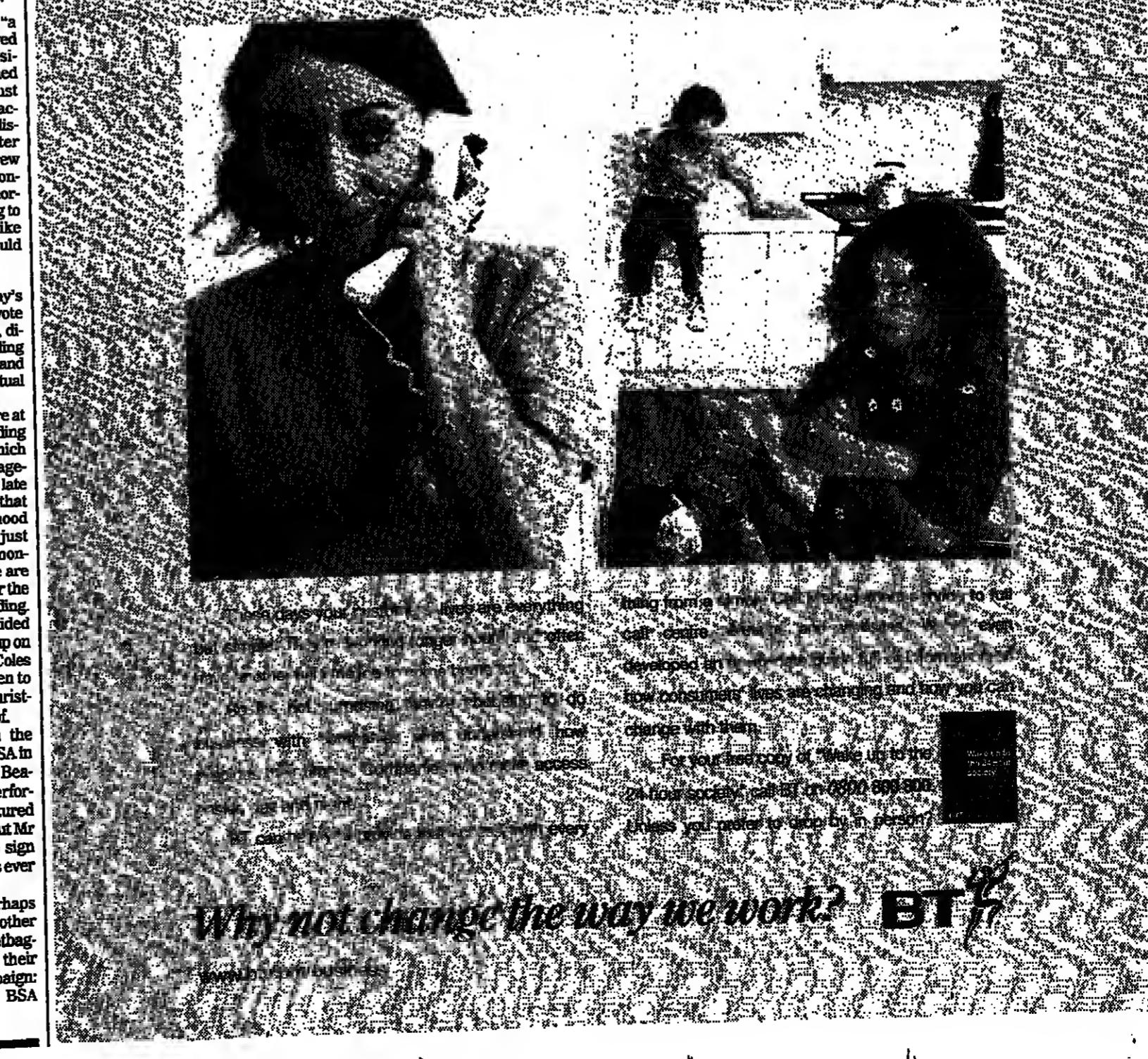
NO bearing on other parts of Peptide's oral mucosal vaccine programme," he said.

The shares were floated at 200p in November 1995, raising almost £220m in new money and valuing the company at £68m. Peptide has yet to make a profit, losing £6.35m in 1997.

The company made its name by developing anti-allergy vaccines for complaints such as food allergies and hay fever. Its strategy is to develop drugs to the first stages of clinical trials and then to license them out to the bigger drugs companies to take them through to the marketing stage.

Its partners include Medeva, SmithKline Beecham and Pfizer. It is working with Pfizer to develop vaccines to treat cats and dogs for allergies to flea bites. It is also developing a potential vaccine against the *E. coli* food poisoning bug, but this is still in the early stages.

"Do I like shopping by phone? No, I much prefer dragging my kids around a supermarket for 3 hours."



FOOT
W

MAIN MOVERS											
RISES						FALLS					
PRICE(P)	CHG(P)	%CHG	PRICE(P)	CHG(P)	%CHG	PRICE(P)	CHG(P)	%CHG	PRICE(P)	CHG(P)	%CHG
EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES - 1.1.91											
JLB Sports	533.50	+54.00	11.38	Peggy's Tea	157.50	-49.00	-23.75				
Sygelectryx Grp	146.50	+2.50	1.73	Alphatec Grp	145.00	-30.00	-17.16				
Stanley Lake	341.00	+10.00	4.82	Forster Grp	132.00	-22.00	-13.78				
Banffs Prems	220.00	+9.00	4.02	Masterton	112.50	-2.50	-1.78				
Aerozine Plc	342.00	+11.00	3.22	Jannie Perle	165.50	-13.00	-7.54				
Cheviote Grp	45.00	+1.00	2.13	Schroeders	105.00	-10.00	-9.14				
John David	33.00	+2.00	6.00	Milne Pte	318.00	-20.00	-6.10				
Burley Knadsen	253.50			Westgate	45.00	-3.00	-6.50				
FOOD PRODUCERS - 1.1.93											
Food Producers	200.00	+10.00	5.00	Food Producers	190.00	-10.00	-5.26				
Food Producers	190.00	+10.00	5.26	Food Producers	180.00	-10.00	-5.56				
Food Producers	180.00	+10.00	5.56	Food Producers	170.00	-10.00	-5.86				
Food Producers	170.00	+10.00	5.86	Food Producers	160.00	-10.00	-6.16				
Food Producers	160.00	+10.00	6.16	Food Producers	150.00	-10.00	-6.46				
Food Producers	150.00	+10.00	6.46	Food Producers	140.00	-10.00	-6.76				
Food Producers	140.00	+10.00	6.76	Food Producers	130.00	-10.00	-7.06				
Food Producers	130.00	+10.00	7.06	Food Producers	120.00	-10.00	-7.36				
Food Producers	120.00	+10.00	7.36	Food Producers	110.00	-10.00	-7.66				
Food Producers	110.00	+10.00	7.66	Food Producers	100.00	-10.00	-8.06				
Food Producers	100.00	+10.00	8.06	Food Producers	90.00	-10.00	-8.36				
Food Producers	90.00	+10.00	8.36	Food Producers	80.00	-10.00	-8.66				
Food Producers	80.00	+10.00	8.66	Food Producers	70.00	-10.00	-9.06				
Food Producers	70.00	+10.00	9.06	Food Producers	60.00	-10.00	-9.36				
Food Producers	60.00	+10.00	9.36	Food Producers	50.00	-10.00	-9.66				
Food Producers	50.00	+10.00	9.66	Food Producers	40.00	-10.00	-10.06				
Food Producers	40.00	+10.00	10.06	Food Producers	30.00	-10.00	-10.36				
Food Producers	30.00	+10.00	10.36	Food Producers	20.00	-10.00	-10.66				
Food Producers	20.00	+10.00	10.66	Food Producers	10.00	-10.00	-11.06				
Food Producers	10.00	+10.00	11.06	Food Producers	0.00	-10.00	-11.36				
MARKET LEADERS											
TOP 20 VOLUMES at 5pm											
Rank	Int'l	Stock	Int'l	Stock	Int'l	Stock	Int'l	Stock	Int'l	Stock	Int'l
1	Royal & Sun Alliance	1,000.00	Trans-Pac	1,000.00	Brake & Wilkins	900.00	Reico Tech Plc - R	625.00	Siemens	625.00	Siemens
2	BT Group	725.00	Telecoms	725.00	BT Group	725.00	BT Group	625.00	BT Group	625.00	BT Group
3	British Telecom	625.00	BT Group	625.00	BT Group	625.00	BT Group	525.00	BT Group	525.00	BT Group
4	BT Group	525.00	BT Group	525.00	BT Group	525.00	BT Group	425.00	BT Group	425.00	BT Group
5	BT Group	425.00	BT Group	425.00	BT Group	425.00	BT Group	325.00	BT Group	325.00	BT Group
6	BT Group	325.00	BT Group	325.00	BT Group	325.00	BT Group	225.00	BT Group	225.00	BT Group
7	BT Group	225.00	BT Group	225.00	BT Group	225.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group
8	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group
9	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group
10	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group
11	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group
12	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group
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14	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group
15	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group
16	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group
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29	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group
30	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group
31	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group
32	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group
33	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group
34	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group	125.00	BT Group
35	BT Group	125.00	BT								

Footsie engulfed in a wave of worries

FOOTSIE TOOK its biggest tumble in three months yesterday tripped by a nasty combination of gloom coming from the US and domestically generated jitters. The repetition of Tuesday's comments from the chairman of the US Federal Reserve, Alan Greenspan, on the upside risks to inflation and interest rates, and the slump in the Dow which followed, heightened fears that the equities markets' party may be nearing the end.

But the market had been on a downward slope before Mr Greenspan had uttered a word, with a wave of bearish feelings engulfing pharmaceuticals and banking, two of the sectors that led the recent record-breaking advance.

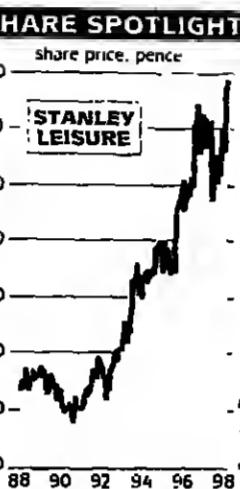
Not even a set of weaker-than-expected retail sales data was able to provide comfort and in the end the FTSE 100 closed at 5,589.5 points, its lowest level of the day, after a 14.31

CENTRICA, the UK gas supply business spun off from British Gas last year, felt the pinch of a gloomy note from Salomon Smith Barney. The shares lost 2.75% to close at 101.75p after analyst Simon Taylor warned of the "significant downside risks". He believes Centrica's earnings will be put under pressure by a slide in the gas price of its Morecambe Bay field, while the core supply business will suffer from increasing competition or regulation.

point slide. This 2.3 per cent drop was the largest fall in three months and brought the index below the psychologically important 6,000 barrier. The second-liners fared slightly better, with the FTSE 250 down 4.4 to 5,659.3 and the small cap down 1.9 to 2,570.2.

On the domestic front, pharmaceuticals looked particularly off-colour, as the bout of selling triggered yesterday by SmithKline Beecham's mu-

MARKET REPORT
FRANCESCO GUERRERA



Source: Bloomberg

the next one on the sick list, losing an unhealthy 23.7 per cent to end 45p lower at 157.5p on the news that its intra-nasal flu vaccine had proved to be ineffective in preliminary trials.

The only bright spot in the sector was Alyzime, a small biotechnology company, which put on 12.86 per cent to close 4.5p higher at 39.5p after announcing its deal with SB to develop its anti-irritable bowel syndrome treatment.

Arch-rival Sedgwick, which will become the dominant UK independent broker after the deal, put on 9.32 per cent, or 12.5p, to close at 146.5p.

WS Atkins, the facilities management group, hit an all-time high of 804.5p, after rising 30p on the news it had won a £120m contract to look after 1,000 buildings owned by the Employment Service.

Among the front-liners, an upbeat agm statement helped Scottish Power, the utility group, to post a 2p advance to 82p, one of only seven blue chips to rise yesterday.

Reuters, the information provider, was another riser in the FTSE 100, putting on 1.5p to 632p, despite a slide in interim profits and a warning of tough times ahead. EMI, the music group, firm up 7p to 517.5p, as the periodical rumours that it might be taken over by a US rival resurfaced. BOC rose 7p to 860, after Salomon described

Talking about nervousness on earnings prospects, banks yesterday had an awful day, with dealers starting to feel the traditional pre-reporting season jitters. Lloyds TSB was down 50p to 871p, closely followed by Woolwich, which lost 50p to finish at 226p. Halifax, also on next week's results roster, was down 30p to 755p.

HSBC Holdings lost 42p to close at 1,631p, as mystery continued to surround the intentions of Martin Ebner, the Swiss corporate raider who master-minded the UBS-SBC merger. Yesterday he revealed that he was looking to increase "significantly" his 0.4 per cent stake, with dealers speculating he could go as high as 5 per cent.

In a day when red was the colour on trading floor's screens, the few spots of blue came from companies buoyed by bid talk. JJB Sports topped the list of FTSE 250 risers, putting on 11.2 per cent to close 54p higher at 533.5p after it revealed it was in merger talks with a rival sports retailer, the privately owned Sports Division.

Willis Corroon shot up 10.6 per cent to 197.5p, after the troubled insurance broker agreed to an £85m takeover by a group of UK and US insurers. Peptide Therapeutics was

dane results spread through the sector. Among the front-liners, SB led the way downwards, losing 3.56 per cent, to close 26.5p down at 718.5p.

Credit Lyonnais was one of

the brokers rumoured to have gone negative on the company.

The relationship between SB and Glaxo Wellcome, already on tenterhooks after their failed merger saga, is unlikely

to have improved much after yesterday, when Glaxo shares were dragged down in sympathy (or should it be antipathy?) with SB. They ended 65p lower

at 1,800p.

Other casualties included

Medeva, which topped the list

of the FTSE 250 fallers, after reporting poor interim figures.

The market took fright at in-

creasing US competition for

one of the company's star

drugs and pushed the shares down 11.3 per cent to 152p.

Peptide Therapeutics was

the "cheapest in the sector".

Stanley Leisure, the bookies

chain, hit a jackpot yester-

day, as an increase in the

numbers of fruit machines in

its betting shops led to a 23 per

increase in profits and pushed

the shares 16p higher to an all-

time peak of 341p.

SEAG VOLUME: 832.8m

SEAG TRADES: 57,805

GILTS INDEX: n/a

Medeva loses its way without a blockbuster

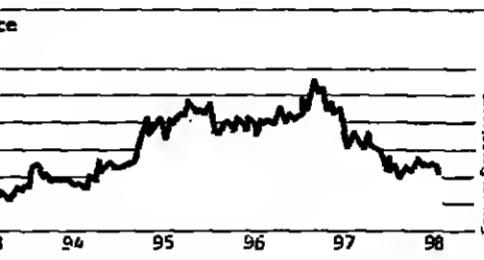
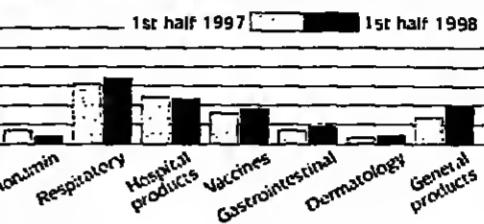
INVESTMENT

EDITED BY PETER THAL LARSEN

MEDEVA: AT A GLANCE

	Market value: £557m, share price: 152p (-19.5p)			
	Full year to 31 Dec '97, half year to 30 June			
	1995	1996	1997	1998
Turnover (£m)	256.00	332.00	355.00	159.00
Pre tax profits (£m)	79.00	38.30	110.90	45.60
Earnings per share (p)	16.90	3.10	21.40	8.50
Dividends per share (p)	3.97	4.80	5.50	1.90
	2.00			

Sales by category* * 1997 amounts restated at 1998 exchange rates



Source: Bloomberg

Double woe for Allied Textiles

THE TEXTILE sector has been

savaged by a double whammy.

On the one hand the soaring

pound has hit exports.

On the other demand at home

has weakened due to higher

interest rates and faltering

consumer confidence.

After the failure of its

Ionamin anti-obesity drug,

Medeva's best hope is

Hepagene, which is currently in

trials as a treatment for

hepatitis B.

Which makes valuing

Medeva tricky. Future cash

flows from methylphenidate

are probably worth £100m at

best. The remaining drugs,

which will grow steadily but

unspectacularly, are probably

worth another £200m.

Factor in debt of £22m and

the implied value of Medeva's

product pipeline is over £200m.

With Hepagene still in trials,

that figure looks demanding.

Another share buy-back may

help but the shares, down 19.5p

to 152p yesterday, are high

enough.

But the bidders have walked

away and yesterday's dip in

the price to 99.5p after the com-

pany said it may not hit sec-

ond-half forecasts has made Allied

Textiles look even more vul-

nerable.

However, another approach

seems inevitable before long as

the business is dirt cheap by

any yardstick and is one of the

better performing companies in

this for a company that is

valued at just £70m.

A venture capital group

edged up to £4.4m, but it has £10m

in cash and property dis-

posals will net a further £20m-£30m with the funds likely to be

returned to shareholders. All

this for a company that is

valued at just £70m.

What Stanley really needs,

however, is the Monopolies and

Mergers Commission to force

Ladbrokes to sell off some of the

Coral betting shops - giving

Stanley an opportunity to ex-

pand its chain.

Profit forecasts for the cur-

rent year are around £27.3m. On

a forward multiple of about 20

to the shares, which rose 16p to

341p yesterday, look fair value.

forecast of £14.5m before ex-
ceptions, the shares trade on a forward multiple of just seven. Negative sentiment will hamper progress in the short term but on pure value considerations the shares are a buy.

Stanley Leisure looks a good bet

BETTING was on a roll even before the World Cup at bookies Stanley Leisure. In the 53 weeks to the beginning of May turnover was up 12 per cent while profits rose 23 per cent to £23.9m, despite Stanley setting aside £500,000 for its Scottish casino properties which are having a hard time.

Actual bets made rose 5 per cent, but turnover was up 11.5 per cent and profits up 37 per cent. The casino division had a stickier time, with attendances rising 4.5 per cent, and operating profits were static at £11m after allowing for the property costs.

However, most of the casinos are in provincial locations not normally favoured by foreign high-rollers, whose spending power has been hit by the Asian crisis. The changes in betting duty announced in the Budget will also have relatively little effect, and Stanley says the current year is off to a good start.

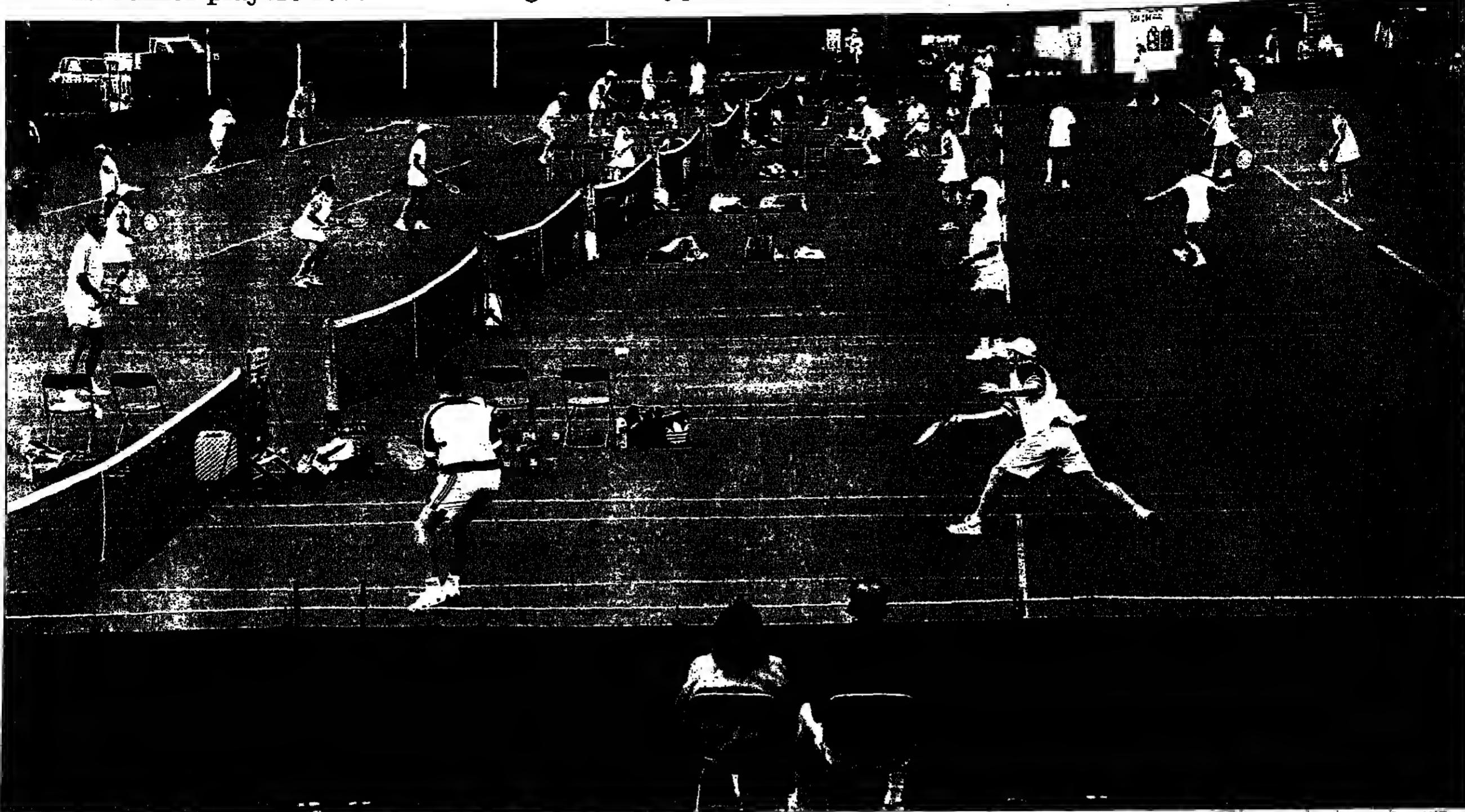
Recession would do the business no good but further deregulation is good news. Increases in the minimum stakes and prize money for casino betting machines and a more modest increase in maximum prizes from fruit machines take effect from October. In the next two years more provincial towns could be opened up to casinos

What Stanley really needs, however, is the Monopolies and Mergers Commission to force Ladbrokes to sell off some of the Coral betting shops - giving Stanley an opportunity to expand its chain.

Profit forecasts for the cur-

SPORT

Tennis: Junior players revel in the delights of a bygone era as Devonshire Park welcomes a new generation



Competition in the Lawn Tennis Association's Inter-County Cup was as intense as ever at Devonshire Park yesterday. A total of 800 players from 44 counties take part in the event at 13 different venues.

Robert Hallam

Corinthian spirit celebrated in style

As players have appreciated since 1895, County Week's frantic camaraderie sustains traditional values. By John Roberts

IT IS just possible that Sally Jones has done more to attract young people to tennis this week than all the money spent on promoting the game.

A journalist, television presenter and poacher-turned-gamekeeper in her role as the non-playing captain of the Warwickshire women's team, title holders at the Lawn Tennis Association Inter-County Cup at Devonshire Park in Eastbourne, Jones has shown how much fun can be had, on the court and off it.

Moreover, she has achieved this by telling all, or at least some of it, in an article for the official publication of the LTA.

Her feature in the latest edition of *British Tennis* is the sequel to a light-hearted magazine piece Jones wrote 20 years ago, which touched on "the behind-the-scenes shenanigans" during County Week, when she was a relative newcomer to the Warwickshire team.

County officials of the time were not amused. Jones recalls, "Most reprehensible, apparently, were the allusions to our night-time cocktail parties at the Grand Hotel, at which most of the side, including several 'promising juniors', husky patrolling the corridors of the Grand Hotel after 10pm in battleaxe mode to discover who has popped out to the office for a few tipples of Diamond White, or whether any of our giggly teenagers has decided to sneak off for a quiet tryst with some older married tennis coach."

Of course, County Week is not all hard work. There is tennis, too. Levity aside, the tournament does allow the sport to breathe once a year in an environment which is charming in its contrast to the run-of-the-millionaire professional tour events.

The 30th anniversary of open tennis has been marked in various ways in a variety of places. County Week pays homage to yesteryear pre-1968. It is tennis for its own sake, with 800 players from 44 counties competing in 13 venues, ranging from Eastbourne to Bude. Professionals become amateurs again. The reward for a schedule of three fiercely contested doubles matches

loves with varying degrees of discretion while the teams noted these going-on half-gleefully and half-shocked, with adolescent prurience.

And, "Why, they're nearly 50!", as if Methuselah had been caught in *flagrante delicto*.

Time has moved on. "I am now part of the officialdom I once ridiculed," Jones says, "painfully aware of my responsibilities *in loco parentis* to the current generation of 'promising juniors', husky patrolling the corridors of the Grand Hotel after 10pm in battleaxe mode to discover who has popped out to the office for a few tipples of Diamond White, or whether any of our giggly teenagers has decided to sneak off for a quiet tryst with some older married tennis coach."

Some choice self-critical language is expressed, and there are conflicts. A referee is on hand should disputes fail to be resolved by the players themselves. Eyes are on the ball, but concentration slips occasionally when it comes to changing the scoreboard, another DIY operation. Such was the confusion during Warwickshire women's opening rubber against South Wales that the players were unable to agree whether they were still in the first set or into a second. They could not even remember how many times each player had served.

So intense is the competition per day amounts to pride in the endeavour, win or lose.

"Elsewhere," mused Austin Smith, an LTA vice-president and chairman of the Veterans' Association of Great Britain, "it seems to me players are almost beaten before they start. But here it's the opposite. The adrenaline flows and you get the impression that they would die for their team. They throw themselves at the ball like dear old Becker."

At first glance, the constant action on the 18 courts resembles a battery hen's outing. The four players in each of the matches scurry about deciding points with enthusiastic shots and arbitration. There are no umpires, no line judges, no ball-boys; and when it comes to changes, competitors are encouraged to towel down briskly and play on.

In his book, *Sporting Gentlemen*, which traces men's tennis from the "age of honour to the cult of the superstar", E Digby Baltzell is less than enamoured with current trends. The American professor of history and sociology concludes:

"The trouble with tennis largely lies in the radical change from a provincial amateur game dominated by the ideals of an Anglo-American upper class and its British Commonwealth counterparts to a new world tennis game, with no common sporting ideals, held together by the common pursuit of money."

"...Almost from the beginning, especially since the age of McEnroe and Connors [professional] tennis has remained at the dead level of a business."

As the professor acknowledges, there is no going back, and although some would sympathise with many of his views, few would want a return to the days when sham amateurism reigned and the image of the sport was a "living lie", as the late Herman David termed it when he was chairman of the All England Club.

We must simply rejoice in the preservation of nostalgic cameos

such as those being enacted with such vigour this week. The Inter-County Cup has been described as an anachronism and a total irrelevance to the modern game. That, if true, ought to be regarded as a virtue.

A number of locations have been cited as cradles of the sport since it spilled on to the lawns from the courts of royalty. The Manor House Hotel, at Leamington Spa, boasted the world's first tennis club in 1872. Two years later Major Walter Clopton Wingfield, a retired cavalry officer, patented box sets of *Sphairistike* (the Greek for "ball game") at five guineas a time, after experimenting on the lawn beside his home, Rhysman Hall, in Llandysilio, Montgomeryshire.

Devonshire Park has played a significant part in the development of the sport. It was here, for example, where a holidaying Fred Perry was inspired to take up the sport; where Martina Navratilova fine-tuned her serve and volley for Wimbledon triumphs; and where, last month, Jana Novotna won her first grass court singles title (en route to winning her second, at Wimbledon).

County Week was started in 1895 with 21 teams (men only, the women's event commencing four years later), including Wales, Scotland, Oxford University and Cambridge University. The teams were divided into four regional groups playing a knockout competition, which later evolved into a round-robin format.

Although Devonshire Park has



Sally Jones offers encouragement to her Warwickshire team

in Group One since 1953, the spirit of the event is widespread. For example, when Sally Jones was the sports presenter for BBC Breakfast Time in 1985, she was playing in Group Two in Exmouth. There was an emergency at the BBC, Jeremy Paxman had been taken ill.

Jones travelled to London by train after dinner, appeared in the studio in the early hours of the morning, presented the programme, and was driven back to Exmouth "at 120mph" to help Warwickshire defeat Sussex.

Much fun was had, too. Until lights out, of course.

Schofield claims breach of contract over sacking

RUGBY LEAGUE
BY IAN LAYBOURN

GARRY SCHOFIELD, the former Great Britain captain, yesterday left Super League strugglers Huddersfield and announced he was suing the club for wrongful dismissal.

Huddersfield said on Monday that the stand-off was being relieved of his coaching duties and would be reverting to his former status as player.

The club said that they had taken action because Schofield, who was only eight months into a three-year contract as head coach, did not possess the correct coaching qualifications – a

level three certificate. Schofield immediately sought legal advice and his solicitor, Paul Scholey, yesterday announced that action was being taken for alleged breach of contract.

In a statement issued through his solicitor, Schofield said: "The actions of the club leave me with no alternative but to regard myself as dismissed."

"I feel badly let down. I can't believe that the club would expect me now to play for them following my dismissal as coach. My confidence in the board has been shattered by their approach and it would not be fair either to the other players or me to expect me to continue to play for the Giants."

The Huddersfield chief executive, Les Coulter, said: "When we put the problem to Garry on Saturday he agreed to revert to being a player and pledged himself £10 per cent to the club."

Schofield said: "The club purported to remove him on the basis that he was under qualified, lacking a level three certificate. In fact, it now seems no such requirement arises until October 1999."

Under Schofield, who succeeded Steve Ferres as coach last November, the Giants won just two of their 13 Super League matches and are four points adrift at the foot of the table. Schofield, a £135,000 buy

from Leeds in February 1996, is said to be keen to stay in the game. He has played more than 500 matches for Hull, Leeds, Balmain, Western Suburbs and Huddersfield and made a record-equalling 46 appearances for Great Britain, whom he captained 13 times.

Jason Flowers, the Castleford full-back, is in line for his first appearance for Scotland after being named yesterday in a squad of 24 by the coach, Billy McGinty. He is one of 15 newcomers – who include an Australian, two New Zealanders and a South African. Scotland have taken advantage of the relaxation of the qualification rules and will play their first game in



Schofield: Suing club

Griffiths dismisses World Cup worries

RUGBY UNION

THE WELSH Rugby Union chairman, Glynford Griffiths, has dismissed fears that the 1999 Rugby World Cup will not be held in Wales and that the Millennium Stadium will not be completed on time.

Griffiths insists that the construction of the new £120m stadium normally takes four years but we are trying to build in two and a quarter years. But we will open the stadium on June 26th, 1999 with a game against South Africa and will be ready for the World Cup with the opening match on October 1.

"It is a great project and what we are trying to build in Wales is the finest stadium in the world."

There was other trouble for the WRU yesterday as the New Zealand Rugby Football Union's chief executive, David Moffett, revealed that he had asked the WRU to clarify their position towards the All Blacks' assistant coach, Graham Henry.

There had been media reports that Wales had wanted Henry to succeed Kevin Bowring as national coach. Moffett said in a statement that the NZRFU took a dim view of another national rugby union attempting to induce a leading contracted coach to break an existing agreement. "We view this situation very seriously and demand an explanation from the WRU," Moffett said.

Boon is happy to ride his luck

CRICKET

BY DAVID LLEWELLYN
at Taunton

David Boon could probably bat with his moustache. It is big enough (it would probably also win prizes at the local horticultural show) and on his day he is good enough. But he still twice came within a whisker of losing his wicket yesterday as Andy Caddick found the edge of his bat. If Boon had gone there was every chance that the rest of the Durham side would have meekly followed their captain.

However, the Tasmanian had the luck of the devil and he rode it. The first chance came when the former Australian opener edged just over the top of first slip when he was on two, shortly before lunch. Four hours later, after an irritating interruption by light but persistent rain, Caddick unleashed a beauty that flew off the edge and went like a bullet straight to second slip, where the unfortunate Keith Parsons failed to get his hands on it and succeeded only in spilling the chance.

At that point Boon had only added 10 to his score. He made Somerset pay thereafter as he muscled his way with powerful drives and slashing cuts – one off the towering Graham Rose had hit the boundary boards before anyone had realised it was on its way there – towards a well-earned half-century.

He is certainly in good nick, even if he is nicking the odd delivery. He is more than halfway to 1,000 runs for the season (last year he missed out on the mark by just 19 runs), having passed 50 on four occasions, all in the championship. With an average just a smidgen short of 50, Boon has added some serious clout to Durham's cause.

Unfortunately for Somerset, Mark Lathwell – possibly partially unsighted by his helmet, but nevertheless able to move smartly round behind the stumps from his close catching position – fumbled it, and a potential run-out opportunity was missed.

Unlike Boon, however, Morris was unable to make the most of what turned out to be his lucky day. At four or so later he cut Parsons unerringly to Adrian Pierson at cover and departed for 30. Compensation was on hand, however,

in the form of the news that the former Derbyshire batsman had been awarded a benefit next year, which will be the sixth and final one of his present contract.

Lewis had gone by then, losing his leg ball to an unpredictable bowler from Caddick, while Jimmy Daley, who replaced Morris, was caught for two at slip.

Mike Smith and Courtney Walsh shared five wickets for

True, they have slipped up of late, sliding from the heady heights of third in the table back to seventh after heavy defeats in their last two matches.

But after some early wobbles Boon now in his second season with Durham, cruised to another fifty and a third championship century is well within his scope. His third-wicket partnership with the steady Nick Speak (43), which has carried Durham out of immediate danger, has so far realised 87 runs.

While Somerset are not making scoring that easy, there were a few too many lapses in the field. The earliest came in the third over when John Morris, having survived a bellowed appeal for leg before to Andy Caddick, decided to turn the moment into a run. Not a good idea. He was sent back by his opening partner, Jon Lewis, but was well beaten to the crease by the ball.

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t Valentine
attractive
to hopeful
punters

Goodwill Games: Impressive victory for British triple jumper is overshadowed by horrific injury to Chinese gymnast

Edwards leaves his best until last

BY JOHN MEHAFFEY
in New York

THE BRITISH world record holder Jonathan Edwards, won the Goodwill Games triple jump in New York on Tuesday, but the night's events were marred by a serious injury to a Chinese gymnast in the vault event.

Lan Sang was in a critical but stable condition yesterday morning after spending the night in the intensive care unit of Nassau County Medical Centre after a horrific fall.

The 17-year-old Lan, China's champion women's vaulter, fractured two vertebrae at the base of her neck and was paralysed from the chest down after landing on her head while attempting a forward vault in practice before Tuesday night's competition.

Lan apparently lost her bearings while in the air in a practice vault and landed on her head on the mat.

The Games' chief physician, Dr Brock Schnebel, said: "Al-

this time she cannot move her legs. She has minimal motion of her arms and cannot feel from her mid-chest down." He said he did not know if her paralysis would be permanent.

The accident overshadowed Edwards' jump of 17.65m, his best leap of the year so far, which he achieved on his final attempt.

He had jumped on Sunday at Gateshead, arrived in New York on Monday and left for home immediately after winning. "I'm tired. It's very late in the evening on my body clock," he said. "I'm very happy with 17.65 and to beat a great field. As I warmed up it wasn't all there, but there is always a little adrenaline in the last run."

Edwards, who set the world record of 18.29m in 1995 at Gothenburg, Sweden, forced the Cuban world champion, Yoelbi Quasada, to settle for second with 17.27. The Olympic champion, Kenny Harrison of the United States, was eighth and last, at 16.53.

"I had a bad race. I had a bad start, I lost," Bailey said. "I'm not disappointed at all. I'm surprised. It's just one of those things. I was too tight. I wanted to win it too much. It's not

On the track, world champion Maurice Greene outpaced Trinidad's Ato Boldon and Donovan Bailey of Canada to win the 100 metres.

Greene led from the start to win in 9.96sec with the world 200m champion Boldon second in 10.00 and the American Brian Lewis third in 10.25.

"I guess I'm the world's fastest man," Greene said. "I had a very good start, a very good drive phase and I accelerated very well. The reason I won is I executed my race and did not worry about the other guys."

Bailey set the world record of 9.84sec to win the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, but has not run well this season. He had a poor start and slowed before the finishing line and was seventh in 10.30.

"It tells me I can run well this season and I'm back where I was," Johnson said. "It's a matter of getting in a few more workouts and some races. I'm definitely on the road to getting back where I was."

The Olympic champion, Noureddine Marzouki of Algeria, took command of the race at the bell and never relinquished the lead, winning in 10.22m 53.39sec. Kenyans William Tanui and Daniel Komen trailed in 10.40 and 10.47 respectively.

For the second time this year, the 34-year-old world record holder, Sergei Bubka of Ukraine, was called for a time violation and recorded no height. The American Jeff Hartwig won the competition with a vault of 6.01 metres, surpassing his national record.

Jackie Joyner-Kersee struggled at times, but made it through the first day of the final heptathlon of her illustrious career. The world record holder had 3,833 points after four events to trail fellow American DeeDee Nathan by 34 points.

"I'm trying to stay positive and execute," 36-year-old Joyner-Kersee said. "I am a fighter, so I've just got to go for it."

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Lan Sang is attended by paramedics after falling during practice for the vault AFP

Jonathan Edwards makes the final leap that gave him victory in the triple jump in New York on Tuesday AP

Neary proves a popular winner

BOXING

BY GLYN LEACH

FOR ONCE, boxing didn't shoot itself in the foot. ITV's return to live coverage of the sport on Tuesday night did not elicit outbreaks of rioting, fighting, hepatitis or worse. Instead, the network's decision to end a four-year period of non-involvement was rewarded by a fight that represented boxing at its best.

And with early signs that the broadcast was well-received, there is every likelihood that the terrestrial television company will increase its involvement in the often controversial sport.

ITV were delighted with Neary's third defence of the World Boxing Union lightweight championship against South African southpaw Naas Scheepers. The bout, staged at the Kingsway Leisure Centre, Widnes, was a minor classic, 12 rounds of committed, exciting boxing, after which Neary, from Liverpool, was awarded a wide, unanimous decision.

Carol Millward, head of press and publicity for ITV, said: "It was a fantastic fight. While a dedicated network such as Sky Sport can finance major promotions in Britain, thus facilitating increased championship opportunities for domestic fighters, the limited availability of the satellite chan-

nel in comparison with a major terrestrial has resulted in a lack of public recognition for contemporary fighters.

ITV backed away from boxing after a succession of major names, in whom they had invested heavily, left the network for BSkyB. A further factor in their decision was that many of the matches they have bought in the past transpired to be uncompetitive.

But over the past three years, Neary's promoters, Munro-Hyland, in conjunction with the Norfolk-based WBU, have provided a consistently high level of matchmaking, reflected by Neary-Scheepers, and also by a fight for the WBU's lightweight

title - also on the Widnes card but not shown by ITV - which saw Liverpool's Colin Dunne survive a late scare to defeat his French challenger, Affif Djetti, also on points.

The return to terrestrial television has provided a lifeline for boxing, but the ITV's controller of sport, Brian Barwick, stresses that caution will be their key when deciding on future policy.

That was a great fight, a genuinely great one, but without meaning to sound overly negative, we will take things slowly and on a fight-by-fight basis for the time being," he said.

"Boxing has got to do a lot of work to get back into the mass

audience's affection - a lot of people have got on with their lives since boxing was last shown four years ago. But the viewing figures were satisfactory, a good building block if we decide to go forward, and the experiment must be seen as a success."

Steve Collins, the former WBO middleweight and super-middleweight champion, has announced that he will return to the ring. Collins retired at the end of 1997, but the 34-year-old

said

that he would like the chance to beat Chris Eubank for a third time, before aiming to meet Roy Jones Jr, who holds the World Boxing Council and World Boxing Association light-heavyweight titles.

MIKE TYSON's advisor, Shelly Finkel, apparently went to New Jersey to seek a new license for the boxer because he did not think he would be re-licensed in Nevada, it emerged on Monday.

"I believed Mike Tyson would be licensed in Nevada, I wouldn't have gone to New Jersey first," Finkel said.

Tyson's license was revoked by the Nevada State Athletic Commission for hitting Evander Holyfield's ears in a world title fight last July. Tyson became eligible to reapply for his license a year after the decision, on 9 July. A hearing on the New Jersey application is set for 29 July.

The NSAC chairman, Dr Elias Ghaniem, the vice chairman Dr James Nave and NSAC executive director Marc Ratner, each said they have intentionally avoided discussing the subject of Tyson's reinstatement.

"I can't tell you how anyone would vote because we've made it a point not to discuss it with anyone, including among ourselves," Ratner said.

Ghaniem said that Nevada should decide Tyson's future. "I expect the state of New Jersey to honour our suspension," Ghaniem said. "If Mike Tyson is to be licensed, the place for him to apply is in Nevada."

RACING RESULTS

CATTERICK
2.00, (5) maiden stakes, 2yo+
1. LAURENTIE ... O Holland 6-1
2. Miss Grapette ... J Fortune 3-1
3. Tambourine ... F Lynch 5-2
Also: 11-4 Prospectus (Ab), 10-1 Tangente Flyer (P), 20-1 Ramsey Hope (Ab), 11-1 Tropicana (Ab), 10-1 Vixen (Ab), 7-10, 3-10, 1-11, 1-12, 1-13, 1-14, 1-15, 1-16, 1-17, 1-18, 1-19, 1-20, 1-21, 1-22, 1-23, 1-24, 1-25, 1-26, 1-27, 1-28, 1-29, 1-30, 1-31, 1-32, 1-33, 1-34, 1-35, 1-36, 1-37, 1-38, 1-39, 1-40, 1-41, 1-42, 1-43, 1-44, 1-45, 1-46, 1-47, 1-48, 1-49, 1-50, 1-51, 1-52, 1-53, 1-54, 1-55, 1-56, 1-57, 1-58, 1-59, 1-60, 1-61, 1-62, 1-63, 1-64, 1-65, 1-66, 1-67, 1-68, 1-69, 1-70, 1-71, 1-72, 1-73, 1-74, 1-75, 1-76, 1-77, 1-78, 1-79, 1-80, 1-81, 1-82, 1-83, 1-84, 1-85, 1-86, 1-87, 1-88, 1-89, 1-90, 1-91, 1-92, 1-93, 1-94, 1-95, 1-96, 1-97, 1-98, 1-99, 1-100, 1-101, 1-102, 1-103, 1-104, 1-105, 1-106, 1-107, 1-108, 1-109, 1-110, 1-111, 1-112, 1-113, 1-114, 1-115, 1-116, 1-117, 1-118, 1-119, 1-120, 1-121, 1-122, 1-123, 1-124, 1-125, 1-126, 1-127, 1-128, 1-129, 1-130, 1-131, 1-132, 1-133, 1-134, 1-135, 1-136, 1-137, 1-138, 1-139, 1-140, 1-141, 1-142, 1-143, 1-144, 1-145, 1-146, 1-147, 1-148, 1-149, 1-150, 1-151, 1-152, 1-153, 1-154, 1-155, 1-156, 1-157, 1-158, 1-159, 1-160, 1-161, 1-162, 1-163, 1-164, 1-165, 1-166, 1-167, 1-168, 1-169, 1-170, 1-171, 1-172, 1-173, 1-174, 1-175, 1-176, 1-177, 1-178, 1-179, 1-180, 1-181, 1-182, 1-183, 1-184, 1-185, 1-186, 1-187, 1-188, 1-189, 1-190, 1-191, 1-192, 1-193, 1-194, 1-195, 1-196, 1-197, 1-198, 1-199, 1-200, 1-201, 1-202, 1-203, 1-204, 1-205, 1-206, 1-207, 1-208, 1-209, 1-210, 1-211, 1-212, 1-213, 1-214, 1-215, 1-216, 1-217, 1-218, 1-219, 1-220, 1-221, 1-222, 1-223, 1-224, 1-225, 1-226, 1-227, 1-228, 1-229, 1-230, 1-231, 1-232, 1-233, 1-234, 1-235, 1-236, 1-237, 1-238, 1-239, 1-240, 1-241, 1-242, 1-243, 1-244, 1-245, 1-246, 1-247, 1-248, 1-249, 1-250, 1-251, 1-252, 1-253, 1-254, 1-255, 1-256, 1-257, 1-258, 1-259, 1-260, 1-261, 1-262, 1-263, 1-264, 1-265, 1-266, 1-267, 1-268, 1-269, 1-270, 1-271, 1-272, 1-273, 1-274, 1-275, 1-276, 1-277, 1-278, 1-279, 1-280, 1-281, 1-282, 1-283, 1-284, 1-285, 1-286, 1-287, 1-288, 1-289, 1-290, 1-291, 1-292, 1-293, 1-294, 1-295, 1-296, 1-297, 1-298, 1-299, 1-300, 1-301, 1-302, 1-303, 1-304, 1-305, 1-306, 1-307, 1-308, 1-309, 1-310, 1-311, 1-312, 1-313, 1-314, 1-315, 1-316, 1-317, 1-318, 1-319, 1-320, 1-321, 1-322, 1-323, 1-324, 1-325, 1-326, 1-327, 1-328, 1-329, 1-330, 1-331, 1-332, 1-333, 1-334, 1-335, 1-336, 1-337, 1-338, 1-339, 1-340, 1-341, 1-342, 1-343, 1-344, 1-345, 1-346, 1-347, 1-348, 1-349, 1-350, 1-351, 1-352, 1-353, 1-354, 1-355, 1-356, 1-357, 1-358, 1-359, 1-360, 1-361, 1-362, 1-363, 1-364, 1-365, 1-366, 1-367, 1-368, 1-369, 1-370, 1-371, 1-372, 1-373, 1-374, 1-375, 1-376, 1-377, 1-378, 1-379, 1-380, 1-381, 1-382, 1-383, 1-384, 1-385, 1-386, 1-387, 1-388, 1-389, 1-390, 1-391, 1-392, 1-393, 1-394, 1-395, 1-396, 1-397, 1-398, 1-399, 1-400, 1-401, 1-402, 1-403, 1-404, 1-405, 1-406, 1-407, 1-408, 1-409, 1-410, 1-411, 1-412, 1-413, 1-414, 1-415, 1-416, 1-417, 1-418, 1-419, 1-420, 1-421, 1-422, 1-423, 1-424, 1-425, 1-426, 1-427, 1-428, 1-429, 1-430, 1-431, 1-432, 1-433, 1-434, 1-435, 1-436, 1-437, 1-438, 1-439, 1-440, 1-441, 1-442, 1-443, 1-444, 1-445, 1-446, 1-447, 1-448, 1-449, 1-450, 1-451, 1-452, 1-453, 1-454, 1-455, 1-456, 1-457, 1-458, 1-459, 1-460, 1-461, 1-462, 1-463, 1-464, 1-465, 1-466, 1-467, 1-468, 1-469, 1-470, 1-471, 1-472, 1-473, 1-474, 1-475, 1-476, 1-477, 1-478, 1-479, 1-480, 1-481, 1-482, 1-483, 1-484, 1-485, 1-486, 1-487, 1-488, 1-489, 1-490, 1-491, 1-492, 1-493, 1-494, 1-495, 1-496, 1-497, 1-498, 1-499, 1-500, 1-501, 1-502, 1-503, 1-504, 1-505, 1-506, 1-507, 1-508, 1-509, 1-510, 1-511, 1-512, 1-513, 1-514, 1-515, 1-516, 1-517, 1-518, 1-519, 1-520, 1-521, 1-522, 1-523, 1-524, 1-525, 1-526, 1-527, 1-528, 1-529, 1-530, 1-531, 1-532, 1-533, 1-534, 1-535, 1-536, 1-537, 1-538, 1-539, 1-540, 1-541, 1-542, 1-543, 1-544, 1-545, 1-546, 1-547, 1-548, 1-549, 1-550, 1-551, 1-552, 1-553, 1-554, 1-555, 1-556, 1-557, 1-558, 1-559, 1-560, 1-561, 1-562, 1-563

Zoff the legend lands Italian job

FOOTBALL

DINO ZOFF, the legendary captain of Italy's 1982 World Cup triumph, was named as the new coach of the national side yesterday following the resignation of Cesare Maldini.

The 56-year-old Lazio president, former national goalkeeper and the most capped player in Italian football history, had been widely tipped for the job.

Maldini, the man with the

widest parting in football, took over less than two years ago, but his days as coach were numbered after Italy's lacklustre World Cup performance in which they went out on penalties in the quarter-finals to the eventual winners, France.

Italy almost did not make it to the finals, only scraping through after a two-match play-off. They were beaten to the automatic qualifying place by England. Once in France, Maldini, the 66-year-old father of

Italy's captain, Paolo, was criticised for relying too heavily on dull defensive tactics.

Zoff has signed a four-year contract which runs through until July 2002 and should take him in the next World Cup finals in Japan and South Korea.

Zoff played in a record 112 internationals for his country, culminating in the 1982 triumph - Italy's last major success on the international stage.

The Italian daily sports paper *La Gazzetta dello Sport*

reported that the Italian football president, Luciano Nizzola, who met Maldini on Saturday, had originally hoped he could stay on and had been embarrassed to have to tell him on his mobile while Maldini was sunbathing to announce the change of plan.

"Cesare Maldini was bitter. I can understand that. He's been well and truly lynched," Nizzola was quoted as saying.

The main stumbling block to Zoff's appointment had been

money. As Lazio president he earns £350,000 a season and has a deal until 2002, compared with Maldini's salary of around £230,000, *Gazzetta* said.

Zoff's first game at the helm will be Italy's European Championship qualifier against Wales on 5 September.

He coached Italy's Olympic squad through an unbeaten qualifying campaign for the Seoul Games in 1988 and had a glittering career in Serie A as a player and coach at Juventus.

The club won the Uefa Cup and Italian Cup under his guidance in 1990.

The veteran Italy forward Roberto Baggio said he was delighted at the prospect of Zoff taking over.

"I'm happy for Zoff, who I consider someone who has a great deal of charisma," he said.

But the striker Christian Vieri, whose goals made him one of Italy's leading lights in France, was disappointed for

Maldini, whom he had known when the former coach was in charge of Italy's Under-21 side.

"I don't think Maldini did anything wrong. We went out of the World Cup with our heads held high," Vieri said.

As part of Maldini's settlement, Nizzola said he would offer the former coach a role with the Italian FA. However, the bluntly-spoken Maldini was dismissive. "What's it? Driver's maybe," he said.

In a statement, Nizzola thanked the 66-year-old Maldini, a former Milan defender, for his determined efforts in re-launching the national team's image since he took over as the manager from Arrigo Sacchi.

During Maldini's tenure, Italy won 11 games, drew seven and lost once - 2-2 to Glenn Hoddle's England at Le Tournai last year - while scoring 30 goals and conceding 12.

United still out to sign striker

ALEX FERGUSON, the Manchester United manager, will continue his search for a striker after completing the £14m signing of Jesper Blomqvist yesterday. Ferguson feels his squad still needs reinforcing despite taking his summer spending to over £15m with the purchase of the Swedish international winger from Parma.

Dwight Yorke, the Aston Villa striker, is still top of the shopping list, but any move remains stalemated because Ferguson is not prepared to meet Villa's £16m asking price for the Trinidad and Tobago player.

Ferguson's attempts to sign Marc-Vivien Foé from Lens have also been put back on hold while the Cameroon midfielder recovers from his broken leg. "I think we still need a stronger pool," he said. "Jesper will certainly help, but we need maybe one more. There's nothing to tell with Dwight Yorke at the moment. With any player you get the media valuation and the true valuation, and we have to find out what the true valuation is."

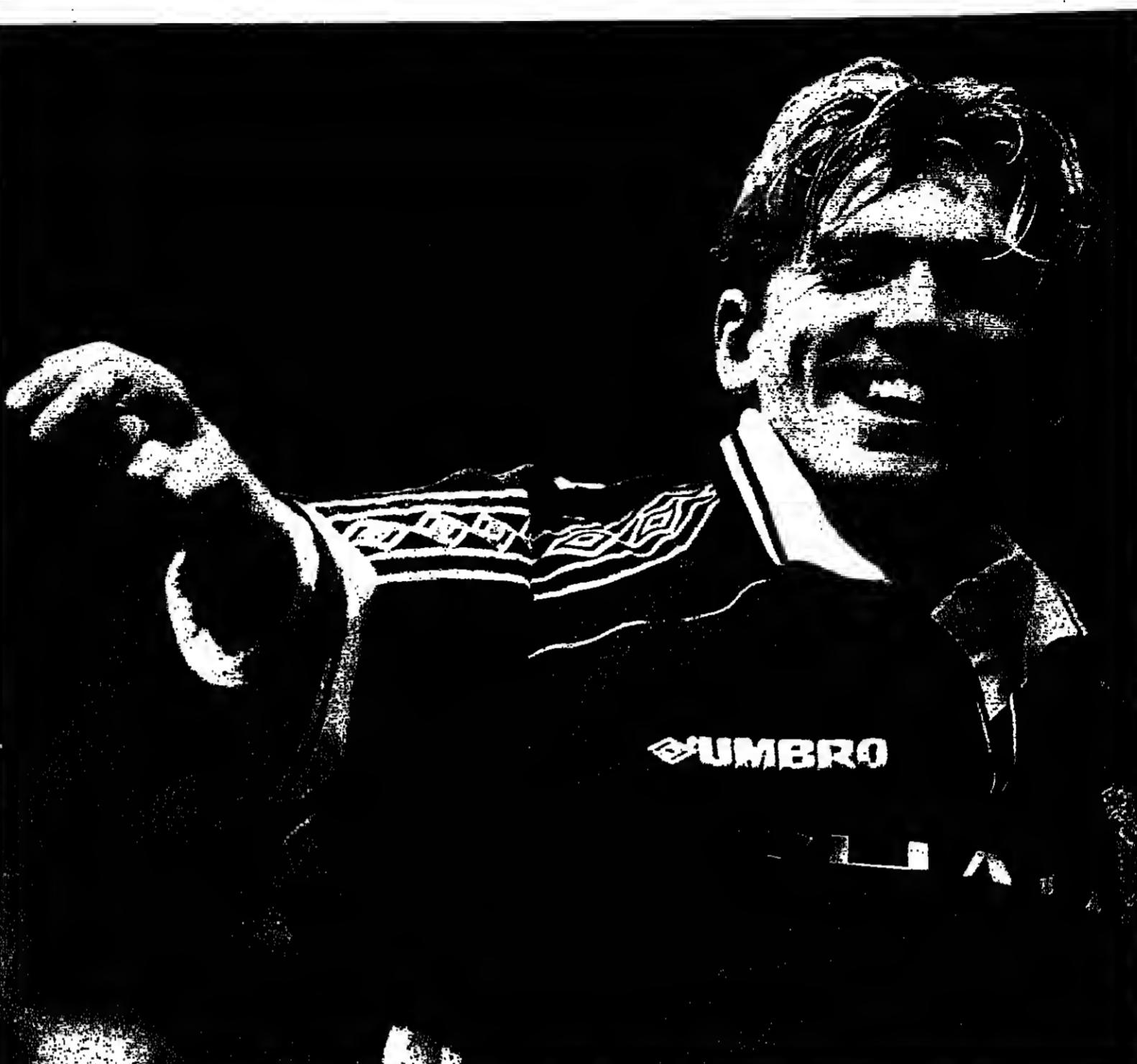
The Premier League yesterday poured cold water on a claim by Doug Ellis, the Aston Villa chairman, that top-flight games were set to be made available on pay-per-view television by the New Year.

Ellis was reported to have declared that between one and four matches a week could be made available on pay-per-view on a Sunday lunchtime by January as an experiment.

But although the idea undeniably remains on the leading clubs' agendas, only two months ago the Premiership chairman rejected a proposal from BSkyB to start a pay-per-view trial from September.

The amount of money on offer was not the only sticking point and many other hurdles, such as the timing of matches, supporters' concerns, policies of games and the role of clubs' in-house TV stations, still have to be resolved.

A Premier League spokesman said: "There are no active negotiations currently underway on the issue of pay-per-view. Our clubs clearly rejected previous proposals that had been put forward. Obviously, there is bound to be speculation but there are no plans at this point for any pay-per-view experiment in the near future."



Manchester United's new signing, the Swedish international forward Lars Jesper Blomqvist, tries out his United shirt for size as he is unveiled at Old Trafford yesterday

Dan Chung/Reuters

Pressure grows on Ronaldo's doctor

ALMOST a fortnight after Brazil lost to France in the World Cup final, speculation about what happened to Ronaldo continues to dominate in Brazil.

"One day doctor Lito [Toledo] is going to reveal what really happened to Ronaldo," Roberto Carlos told the O Globo newspaper.

"Perhaps then people will stop asking me about what happened. I don't know the name of what Ronaldo had. All I know is that it was serious, very serious," he said.

Roberto Carlos was Ronaldo's room-mate when he suf-

fered a 30-40 second convulsion before the World Cup final. The striker had been "burdened with nerves and worries" in the days leading up to the final on 12 July. The two players were talking in their hotel room before the game when Ronaldo stopped talking, went pale and started to sweat heavily, Roberto Carlos said.

As the convulsions started, his arms went crooked and his hands looked deformed because of nervous tension. Other players say he foamed at the mouth and swallowed his tongue.

In an interview with *Isto E*, Toledo said it would be necessary to do "detailed tests" to find out what caused Ronaldo's fit. He did not rule out the sudden illness being an epileptic fit, saying it was possible that people without a history of epilepsy could suffer a one-time occurrence of it.

But he denied claims that Ronaldo had an adverse reaction to an injection of painkiller, saying he would not have administered this before a game as it would have contravened anti-doping regulations. But over the weekend, Toledo was

shown on TV *Globo* saying he gave Ronaldo a sedative before the game. On Monday, however, he said he had given the sedative only after the game.

Brazil, meanwhile, have asked for next month's scheduled friendly against South Korea to be postponed until October. The South Korean Football Association said yesterday Brazilian authorities had sent a letter requesting a new date, citing a need to resolve "internal problems".

The French cabinet voted yesterday to make the country's 22-man World Cup squad

knights of the Legion of Honour. France's 3-0 victory over Brazil in the final, an event that rallied the French in days of joyous celebration, came just two days before the traditional Bastille Day honours list unveiled on 14 July.

The French president, Jacques Chirac, hastily announced the awards at the annual Elysée Palace garden party that turned into a raucous cheering session for the footballers invited as special guests. The France coach, Aimé Jacquet, is also to be decorated as a knight of the Legion of Honour.

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A Premier League spokesman said: "There are no active negotiations currently underway on the issue of pay-per-view. Our clubs clearly rejected previous proposals that had been put forward. Obviously, there is bound to be speculation but there are no plans at this point for any pay-per-view experiment in the near future."

Rios retraces path towards summit

TENNIS

MARCELO RIOS avoided the rash of upsets in the Mercedes Cup yesterday, comfortably defeating Jens Knippschild 7-6, 6-2. Rios will pass Pete Sampras at the top of the ATP world rankings if he reaches the final in Stuttgart.

Rios, briefly the world No 1 this spring, survived an early break in the first set as the German

man charged the net and hit winners all over the court.

But Rios took control of the match after Knippschild let a 4-1 lead slip away in the tie-break. The German then retreated into a string of errors which he capped by hitting a double-fault at 5-5.

Boris Becker beat the No 9 seed, Cedric Pioline, 7-6, 6-1 in his latest attempt to claim a clay court title. Becker, easing into

retirement, came close two weeks ago at the Swiss Open. But for the sixth time, the three-times Wimbledon winner was found wanting in a clay court final.

"It's the same old song," said Becker, 30. "I can't reach the same level as on hard courts or grass. I always come up one match short."

Yet Becker proved he still has the impressive form he

displayed at the Swiss Open against Pioline, ranked 20th in the world.

The former French Open winner Yevgeny Kafelnikov was among six seeds who did not survive yesterday's second round matches. The Czech Bohdan Ulrich defeated the Russian No 4 seed, 6-3, 3-6, 6-3, while the No 8, Alberto Berasategui of Spain, No 10 Thomas Muster, and No 12

Fabrice Santoro, were also beaten by Guillaume Raoux, Fernando Vicente and Albert Portas respectively.

Germany's Hendrik Dreeckmann also upset the 15th-seeded Magnus Larsson, of Sweden, 6-4, 7-5.

Albert Costa of Spain, the No 6 seed, advanced, however, with a comfortable 6-3, 6-1 defeat of the Argentinian Franco Squillari.

Jayasinghe cleared to run

DRUGS IN SPORT

THE WORLD 200 metres silver medallist, Susanthika Jayasinghe, has been cleared of drug charges on a majority decision from a disciplinary committee appointed by Sri Lanka's Amateur Athletics Association.

Jayasinghe, who won the 200m silver medal at last year's World Championships in Athens, was temporarily suspended from international competition after she failed a random drug test conducted by the International Amateur Athletics Federation in April.

"On totality of the evidence and material placed before us, we are of the view that the [Sri Lankan] AAA has failed to prove beyond reasonable doubt that the alleged doping test offence has been committed by Mrs Jayasinghe," two disciplinary committee members said in a statement. The third member held her guilty of the charge.

Sri Lankan AAA officials were not immediately available for comment, but Sri Lankan radio quoted a committee member as saying that Jayasinghe could now race in international events.

Jayasinghe, who claimed earlier that the positive dope test was a conspiracy against her, said on Wednesday that she welcomed the decision.

"I knew I was not guilty of the charge but because it was a conspiracy against me, I thought they might get away with their accusation," she said.

Jayasinghe became the first Sri Lankan in 49 years to win a medal at an international championship, when she finished ahead of the favourite, Merlene Ottey, in 22.39sec in Athens. The race was won by Zhamila Pintussevitch of Ukraine.

ENGLAND WILL field a strong squad which includes seven players ranked in the world's top 10 as squash makes its Commonwealth Games debut in Malaysia in September.

The reigning world doubles champions, Mark Cairns and Chris Walker, have already been told to forget singles play in the quest for medals, while the British champion, Simon Parker, leads the English challenge for the men's singles title.

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job

Golf: They all came to hear a tale about the latest sporting millionaire but British teenager is happy with £625

Rose earns his first pay cheque

By TIM GLOVER
in Hilversum

IT HASN'T taken the boy wonder long to receive his first cheque as a professional. Three days after his tour de force in the Open Championship, Justin Rose won the pro-am at the TNT Dutch Open yesterday.

Playing with three Dutch amateurs bearing handicaps that Rose surpassed when he was still teething, the 17-year-old won the grand sum of £625, beating Bernhard Langer on a countback over the homeward nine holes.

Last Sunday Rose, playing in his first and last Open as an amateur, shot 69 at Royal Birkdale and finished joint fourth, a position that would have

earned him £10,000 had he been a professional.

Yesterday he again scored 69 under somewhat different circumstances at the Hilversumsche Club on the outskirts of Amsterdam and came up smelling of tulips.

"It's a nice feeling that I've earned some money by going to work," Rose said. "The last couple of weeks I've worked at a leisure centre for a few hundred pounds for personal living expenses to take pressure off my parents. They were looking after me on the amateur scene and I didn't have any pocket money."

He admitted he had not yet opened an account although, presumably, high street banks will be as keen to do business

with Rose as anybody else, bar those associated with shaving equipment.

"The last seven days I experienced something I always wanted to experience... playing in the Open in front of the biggest crowds I've ever seen in my life and thriving on the experience. Everything that's come with it has also been a dream come true."

His father, Ken, will work closely with Carnegie Sports International, a management company the Roses signed a contract with almost immediately after the final round at Birkdale, told Justin: "You go on a two week golfing holiday and you come back and your life's changed."

At Birkdale, Rose played in

front of huge crowds; here it was not quite three men and a dog. On the canine front Justin is missing his pet Marmaduke, a white Maltese who has been confined to kennels while his master has been causing the greatest stir in golf since young Tom Morris pitched a featherbed into the Swilcan Burn.

There is, of course, more to being a baby superstar than going within a couple of shots of winning the world's greatest championship. Rose can handle himself at a press conference and yesterday he gave another professional performance.

It was just as well because Mike Todd, the man from Carnegie who has taken the place of Marmaduke in being the boy's best friend, was having a hard time of it from the British press. What everybody wanted to hear was that Justin would be worth millions if not billions in a matter of days. "Nothing to report at the moment," Todd said. "There's been considerable interest since the Open but any announcement will be made when the time is right. We are just concentrating on this week at the moment. It's only been a few days since the Open."

Today Rose tees off in the first round with Raymond Russell, with whom he finished joint fourth in the Open, and Costantino Rocca, who was joint eighth. "I enjoyed my amateur career and the way it turned out was the way I'd have written it in a perfect

fairytale. I'm very fortunate. I guess I have to establish myself on the European tour. That's my objective. The key thing is to make cuts because if you don't you don't make any money."

Asked about pitfalls, Rose could see only one. "It's a huge lifestyle change but I think I can cope." Perhaps not so brave. He made about 40 flights last year and so far this season has made 26 - more than most on the professional circuit.

"At Birkdale I was surprisingly relaxed but here I'm kind of stepping into the unknown," Rose said. "It's a case of settling into a normal routine. I don't think it will be an anticlimax."

"As far as I'm concerned everything starts now. Last week was fantastic, a week I'll never forget, but the slate is wiped clean. This is my first professional tournament and if anything good happens it's a bonus. I want to get down to business, I want to really enjoy the week and play well, although my expectations aren't too high after last week. That may have taken a lot out of me."

That was his first admission that what was achieved in six rounds, including two qualifying rounds in a gale, was slightly more arduous than sitting a GCSE exam.

Surviving to the weekend here is his immediate ambition but in the longer term he is looking to match Ernie Els in winning a couple of major championships and also to playing in the Ryder Cup. "I en-



Rose: Professional debut

joyed playing in teams in amateur golf and the Ryder Cup is a top priority," Rose admitted. He may have been talking about the match against the US at The Belfry in 2001. There again, he may be looking at next year's Ryder Cup in Boston.

**United
still out
to sign
striker**

Easy passage for Pantani's climb through ranks

CYCLING

By ROBIN NICHOLL
with the Tour de France

THE SIGHT of a skinny, bald-headed man pedalling to the top of a Pyrenean mountain sent Italians wild on the Tour de France yesterday.

Marco Pantani was in full flight, with Jan Ullrich in the yellow jersey pounding after him, but the Italian, eulogised on one roadside banner as "60 kilos of heart", was proving once again that he is very hard to handle in the mountains.

His prime target was Switzerland's Roland Meier, who, within 10 kilometres of the finish on the fifth mountain of the day, was looking jaded.

Pantani's next aim was to cut back his deficit on Ullrich. He achieved both. Meier, who had been out front for 100 of the 170 kilometres from Luchon despite suffering a fall in the early part of the day, could only glance as Pantani whipped past on his way to victory.

He arrived triumphant for his fifth stage win in three Tours, one minute and 26 seconds clear of Meier, but, more importantly, 1:40 clear of Ullrich. Victory took Pantani into fourth place overall, 3:01 behind the German. With his favoured Alpine challenge to come, the Italian winner of the Giro d'Italia in June should be full of fight.

Yet there was no fighting talk after the race. "I don't want to win the Tour. I am too stressed

from the Giro. I am not 100 per cent and I certainly did not give everything today. I even waited for Ullrich to return to the group after a puncture before I attacked."

Pantani, considered the best climber in the world, said: "I'm not riding at 100 per cent fitness and I have ridden this climb a lot better. First I thought of the stage victory, then I thought about the overall standings and now anything's possible."

Ullrich, who realised he had held on to the yellow jersey, made no effort to go flat out in the closing metres. He was held up by a puncture at the bottom of the 16-kilometre final climb but managed to recover.

However, the German faded in the final metres of the 170 kilometres from the spa town of Luchon, remembered in Tour history as the scene of Robert Millar's 1983 victory. Ullrich also lost seven seconds to the American Bobby Julich, who is his chief challenger, now just 1:11 away from the jersey he calls cycling's Holy Grail.

"I don't think Ullrich is at the same level as last year," Julich said. "But he is still the favourite. I was just happy not to lose time in the Pyrenees."

Pantani took one rival yesterday when Spain's Abraham Olano quit because of the injuries he suffered to his hip in Tues-

day's fall on the Aubisque mountain. Yesterday's mountains offered little respite, and after 100 kilometres the former world road-race champion dismounted and took off in his team car.

At that point Meier was well clear of his earlier partner, Spain's Jose Gomez, and climbed the third mountain, the Col de la Core, alone, with Ullrich and his rivals 3:30 in arrears.

Once the race tackled the 15 kilometres to the ski station of Plateau de Beille near the Andorran border, the reshuffling began as Ullrich came back, aided by his Austrian teammate Georg Totschnig, to lead the pursuit of Meier.

When Pantani pedalled almost effortlessly away from the group, as he had done to finish second on Tuesday, he was chased up the mountain by a fan dressed as the devil complete with horns tail and pitchfork. Hell it was for some but not Pantani, who was in his element. The Italian has had his share of misery. His career was set back when he shattered his left shin in a head-on collision with a jeep in a race. Then last year a wandering cat made him fall in the Giro.

Perhaps that is why he is wary of announcing any ambitions. Along with the other 147 riders he has time to reflect today as it is the official rest day.

The first thing most riders will do is take their bikes, just to keep supple after riding more than 2,000 kilometres in 12 days.



Marco Pantani is urged on by a spectator in yesterday's ascent of five mountain passes in the Pyrenees. Reuters

RESULTS AND STANDINGS

TOUR DE FRANCE 11th stage (105 miles) Luchon to Plateau de Beille		1 M Pantani (It) Mercatone Uno 5hr 15min 27sec; 2 R Meier (Swit) Cofidis +1min 26sec; 3 B Langer (Ger) Telekom +1:40; 4 K Livingston (Us) Cofidis +1:45; 5 M Boogerd (Neth) Saeco +1:50; 6 L Pelizzetti (It) Saeco +1:52; 7 E Escartin (Fr) Cofidis +1:53; 8 J Ulrich (Ger) Telekom +1:49; 9 K Livingston (Us) Cofidis +1:50; 10 A Casero (Sp) Vitalcita +2:01; 11 J Jablanski (Fr) ONCE +2:03; 12 M Meier (Swit) Bankgirolotto +2:03; 13 D Baranowski (Pol) US Postal +2:53; 14 M Serrano (Sp) Keme +2:53; 15 L Leblanc (Fr) Cofidis all same time; 16 J Ulrich (Ger) Telekom +2:57; 17 B Hamburger (D) Cofidis +2:59; 18 A Casero (Sp) Vitalcita +2:59; 19 M Boogerd (Neth) Cofidis +2:59; 20 R Meier (Swit) Cofidis +2:59; 21 M Pantani (It) Saeco +3:01; 22 E Escartin (Fr) Cofidis +3:01; 23 L Leblanc (Fr) Cofidis +3:01; 24 M Serrano (Sp) Keme +3:01; 25 L Leblanc (Fr) Cofidis +3:01; 26 J Jablanski (Fr) ONCE +3:01; 27 B Hamburger (Fr) Cofidis +3:01; 28 A Casero (Sp) Vitalcita +3:01; 29 M Boogerd (Neth) Cofidis +3:01; 30 J Jablanski (Fr) ONCE +3:01; 31 D Baranowski (Pol) US Postal +3:01; 32 M Serrano (Sp) Keme +3:01; 33 L Leblanc (Fr) Cofidis +3:01; 34 M Boogerd (Neth) Cofidis +3:01; 35 J Jablanski (Fr) ONCE +3:01; 36 B Hamburger (Fr) Cofidis +3:01; 37 A Casero (Sp) Vitalcita +3:01; 38 M Boogerd (Neth) Cofidis +3:01; 39 J Jablanski (Fr) ONCE +3:01; 40 M Boogerd (Neth) Cofidis +3:01; 41 M Boogerd (Neth) Cofidis +3:01; 42 M Boogerd (Neth) Cofidis +3:01; 43 M Boogerd (Neth) Cofidis +3:01; 44 M Boogerd (Neth) Cofidis +3:01; 45 M Boogerd (Neth) Cofidis +3:01; 46 M Boogerd (Neth) Cofidis +3:01; 47 M Boogerd (Neth) Cofidis +3:01; 48 M Boogerd (Neth) Cofidis +3:01; 49 M Boogerd (Neth) Cofidis +3:01; 50 M Boogerd (Neth) Cofidis +3:01; 51 M Boogerd (Neth) Cofidis +3:01; 52 M Boogerd (Neth) Cofidis +3:01; 53 M Boogerd (Neth) Cofidis +3:01; 54 M Boogerd (Neth) Cofidis +3:01; 55 M Boogerd (Neth) Cofidis +3:01; 56 M Boogerd (Neth) Cofidis +3:01; 57 M Boogerd (Neth) Cofidis +3:01; 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SPORT

ROSE'S FIRST STEPS AS A PRO P27 • PARTY TIME ON TOUR FOR PANTANI P27



Fourth Test: England in need of dashing debut by Lancashire's 20-year-old all-rounder against formidable South Africa

Flintoff poised to enter the fray

BY DEREK PRINGLE

IF EVER there was a time and a place for Alec Stewart to deliver an "England expects..." speech, this morning's England dressing-room, at Trent Bridge is it. Trailing South Africa 1-0, the home side badly need to win this fourth Test to keep the five-match series alive. With the stage to itself, English cricket cannot again find its waning, as it has done for much of the summer.

While other sports diverted attention, the England cricket team, the game's "shop window," can claim only a few days of supremacy, including the no-win rearguard action in the previous Test at Old Trafford. Patently, it is not nearly enough to convince an already over-patient public that better days lie ahead.

Things might be worse, and at least the public at Nottingham will be seeing the return of leg-spin as well as the possibility of an exciting, young, all-rounder, Andrew Flintoff, making his debut. Nevertheless, deep-seated flaws remain - namely the inability to consistently score big runs and take 20 wickets. Flaws that will continue to prevent England setting both tempo and agenda, two prerequisites for winning Test matches.

England's repeated poor showing at the highest level stems almost directly from their inability to post a competitive total in their first innings. This is nothing new. Indeed they have failed to pass 200 in the first innings in nine of the last 14 Tests. Poor pitches aside, few teams can even expect to draw, let alone win, with such shaky platforms.

It is not an enviable position for a captain to be in, for although the problem is apparent, the remedies are not. After the briefest of honeymoon periods as skipper, Stewart has probably analysed and discussed the problem a 100 times, a contention he more or less acknowledged yesterday.

"We know that first-innings totals generally set up wins," Stewart said. "Hopefully we can do that here. I try to deal in facts with the players. The boys know what's required. It's up to me to give them a few reminders. Of course I can repeat myself forever, but talk means nothing. It is out in the middle that counts."

England have made several changes. But if some believe they have been panicked into making them, Stewart's line was to call it "tinkering".

If it is merely a question of tweaking rather than wholesale demolition, the first spare part was Robert



The South African batsman Jacques Kallis puts in some last-minute practice for the fourth Test against England, which starts today, in front of the new £7.2m stand at Trent Bridge. Peter Jay

Croft, whose early return to Glamorgan yesterday has meant a comeback for Ian Salisbury. Meanwhile, any off-spin duties that may accrue will be shared between Mark Ramprakash and Graeme Hick, who will bat at five and six respectively.

Salisbury, who along with Stewart and Mark Butcher is a member of Surrey, has been bowling well this season. Indeed, but for a groin injury six weeks' ago, he would probably have been recalled earlier.

"He has a slightly different action after working this winter with Terry Jenner in Australia," Stewart said. "I believe he understands his art much better now and is more confident and mature as a bowler as well as a leg-spinner. Certainly he is much more relaxed in the Test environment this time round."

Even so, having Salisbury as your sole front-line spinner is a high-risk policy. The leg-spinner may be bowling well for Surrey, but

there he has Saqlain Mushtaq to take the pressure off him. On what looks to be a well-grassed pitch there will be no hiding place once the seam bowlers get tired.

As ever, England will wait to see how the pitch and conditions scrub up this morning, before finalising their bowling attack. Yesterday, as Sir Garfield Sobers opened the impressive 27.2m Radcliffe Road Stand in blazing sunshine, the pitch was still ominously being kept under covers.

This means that someone wants moisture to be retained in the surface, a situation that ought to favour seam over swing. Either way, the return of Shaun Pollock, who slips into the place vacated by the injured Lance Klusener, will not make life easier for England's top order.

If Flintoff plays, and he should do, a seaming pitch could mean Angus Fraser plays in front of Alan Mullally, though the left-armer will at least - especially at this time of season -

bring a fresh angle, if not a fresh body.

At the moment, Flintoff, who is a burly 6ft 5in tall, is regarded as a batsman who bowls, which is where he scored in selection over Ben Hollioake, who is now apparently a bowler who bats. As such, Flintoff's role as fourth seamer would probably not require more than 10 to 12 overs a day, an ideal amount to wear a newcomer on.

If it is reasonable to cut debutants

some slack, there will no such leeway for Hick. Playing in place of the injured Graham Thorpe, Hick knows he is on borrowed time unless he can score heavily. He has done so before against this South African attack, most notably in the rained-out Test at Centurion Park three winters ago, where he made a century. What would both he and England give for a repeat performance over the next few days?

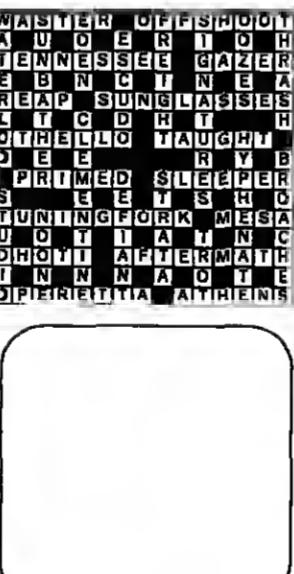
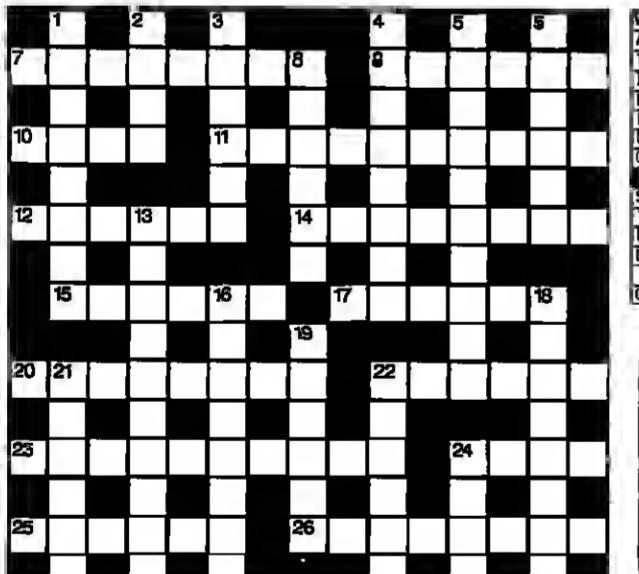
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THE THURSDAY CROSSWORD

No. 3678. Thursday 23 July

By Mass

Wednesday's solution



- ACROSS
7 Smart masking Queen, on left, with Ace (8)
9 Paramount's first film actor (6)
10 Iced bend (4)
11 A balanced hand should win this game (10)
12 Bone a fish, almost the lot (6)
14 Fabulous time absorbed in baking (8)
15 Cheap American dope's hooked old bachelor (3-3)
17 Shower, and it's hot (6)
20 Harsh step, not heartless (6)
22 Protective cover about pipe (6)

- 23 Marine creature seen in trailing plant (10)
24 Pale one, deficient (4)
25 Striking with cue (6)
26 Girl evoking devotion without measure (8)

DOWN
1 Persevering with Law, maybe, in Institute (8)
2 Bird from reduced flock (4)
3 Gaudy vessels, the Spanish (6)
4 Fruit around Australia gets approval (8)
5 Conservative in Japan involved with sake, fresh one (10)
6 Number, in a state, flag (6)

Argentinians on the way to Palace

FOOTBALL

BY ALAN NIXON

TERRY VENABLES is poised to sign two Argentinian youngsters Christian Ledesma and Pablo Rodriguez in a joint deal worth £2.5m.

Venable hopes to tie up the South Americans today with both players flying in from Argentinos Juniors.

Midfield player Ledesma is rated at £2m and considered

one of the best players at his age in the country. Winger Rodriguez is coming on loan for a year and valued at £500,000 if Palace want to sign him later.

Ledesma and Rodriguez

are the latest players to

emerge from Argentinos Juniors,

who are well known as a

a nursery club. The pair have

represented their country at

under-21 level and could repre-

sent a shrewd investment by

Palace who could sell them on

in the future if they make the

grade.

The transfer has been in

the pipeline since the former

England manager took over at

Selhurst Park. Venables origi-

nally wanted Diego Maricic, an-

other Argentinos Juniors

prospect, but he would not

come to a First Division club.

Rodriguez was reluctant to

go to Palace on his own at first

but the signing of Ledesma

has persuaded him to make the

move.

The Everton manager, Wal-

ter Smith, is set to sign French

midfielder Olivier Dacort in a

£2m deal today. Smith was locked in talks with the talented Strasbourg player last night as an Everton delegation flew to France hoping to finalise the transfer.

Dacort impressed Smith last season when he was outstanding as Strasbourg knocked his Rangers side - and Liverpool - out of Europe. Smith has kept a keen eye on Dacort since and moved in last night as he tries to put his second major signing worth £2.5m.

Dacort is on the fringe of the France squad but is tipped to emerge in the wake of the World Cup success and establish himself as a regular. He is a powerful player similar to Arsenal's Emmanuel Petit, a strong defensive player who operates down the left hand side of the field.

Smith wants extra power in

his engine room and the sign-

ing of Dacort, who is also ad-

mired by Newcastle, would re-

lief to build up his squad.

The Everton manager is also

keen on signing Monaco's John

Collins, but feels the price tag

is too high and the Scottish mid-

field man is prepared to wait

until his contract runs out next

summer.

The Merseyside team are

also interested in Cameroon's

Marc-Vivien Foé, who is cur-

rently in negotiations with Man-

chester United.

Coventry are set to spend

the £m they received for the

Romanian striker Viorel

Moldovan on another World

Cup player. The Sky Blues have

refused to reveal their intended target, but their chairman, Bryan Richardson, believes the player could be at Highfield Road by the weekend.

"We are on the tail of a major signing which we hope to have tied up by Thursday or Friday of this week," said Richardson.

"We are only interested in

top international players of

World Cup class."

The former Leeds and Ever-

ton player Ian Snodin has taken

his first steps into manage-

ment by being named as Don-

caster Rovers' new manager.

Snodin, 34, is returning to the

club where he started his ca-

reer as a trainee in 1980.

After moving to Leeds from

Belle Vue, the utility player

won a championship medal at

Goodison Park in 1986-87 be-

fore enjoying spells with Sunder-

land, Oldham and, most re-

cently, Third

Division Scarborough. Doncaster were relegated to the Vauxhall Conference last season.

A mystery consortium is also

keen on signing Monaco's John

Collins, but feels the price tag

is too high and the Scottish mid-

field man is prepared to wait

until his contract runs out next

summer.

The Merseyside team are

also interested in Cameroon's

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rently in negotiations with Man-

chester United.

The deal is conditional on a

satisfactory agreement being

reached with Oxford City Council

and Taylor Woodrow, who

were building Oxford's new

stadium before work stopped in

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THURSDAY REVIEW

COMMENT • FEATURES • ARTS • LISTINGS • TELEVISION

When the Swiss banks released a list of safety deposit boxes from before and during the Second World War, Ron Rosenbaum found it hard to suppress a frisson of excitement. Maybe, just maybe, somewhere behind a three-inch-thick steel door, in an underground vault deep below the city streets of Zurich or Geneva, the truth was hidden. Maybe the secret he was seeking was there, still kept under lock and key after 50 years. Maybe.

As he freely admits, the very idea that his 10-year quest to explain the motivations and nature of Adolf Hitler might be ended by some lost file was "not a realistic expectation". There are many secrets rumoured to be stashed away in Switzerland - the case notes on Hitler's mysterious blindness of 1918; alleged pornographic pictures of his half-niece Geli Raubal, who supposedly committed suicide - but nothing could ever fully explain the man or his actions.

This frisson gives us a clue to what lies behind the search for the psyche of a man who still commands a deadly fascination for scholars and the rest of us. We do not understand Hitler, and we desperately want to - need to, even, find a reason why a man could lead a nation into war and genocide.

"These lost safe deposit stories clearly serve as expressions of anxiety about - and talismans against - an otherwise apparently inexplicable malignant evil," writes Rosenbaum. And that is something that, in our rationalistic, ordered universe, we find hard to accept.

BY ANDREW MARSHALL

Mr Rosenbaum has produced a finely wrought investigation not just of his subject, Hitler, but also of the idea of evil itself and its place in our world. Much of the critical response has been negative - including *The Independent's* review - but the fact is, he was exploring a minefield, and he knew it from the start. He watched Daniel Goldhagen, the historian who, in his landmark book *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, had blamed the German nation itself for the Holocaust, being torn apart in a four-hour panel discussion. Claude Lanzmann, maker of the nine-hour documentary film *Shoah*, told him that to write or even think about Hitler was wrong.

"I think it is to be condemned," he said. To attempt to reconstruct the man and his motives should be beyond anyone. "*Hier ist kein Worum*." (Here there is no why), Lanzmann wrote, an idea he shares with many others.

If for one group of people the very act of explanation is betrayal, tantamount almost to murder itself, then for another, the idea of evil is incomprehensible with modern social science, a relic of theology that we must do without, or simply inapplicable in this case. Rosenbaum was launched into his pursuit of evil by an interview with Lord Dacre, author of *The Last Days of Hitler*. Dacre himself was threatened with death by the Stern Gang, the Zionist underground guerrilla group, for - in their view - exalting Hitler, putting him at the centre of the Holocaust story. Rosenbaum asked him whether he thought Hitler knew that his actions were evil, and got an interesting reply. "Oh no," Dacre said firmly. "Hitler was convinced of his own rectitude." Ironically, his question coincided with a murder much closer to our own times. As he talked with Lord Bullock, the other great British historian of Hitler, the newspapers were reporting the trial of two boys who had taken two-year-old Jamie Bulger from a Liverpool shopping centre, beaten him to death and left his body by a railway line. "Unparalleled evil," the judge called it. Was Hitler evil, then? He asked Bullock, and received a quite different response. "If he isn't evil, who is?" Bullock responded.

This is the terrain that Rosenbaum stakes out, similar to that of Gitta Sereny's examination of Mary Bell, or Blake Morrison's of Bulger's killers. Is this evil? And if it is not, what is? Between these two points - that Hitler is inexplicable, and that Hitler is explicable only in terms of something else, history, psychology or sociology - Rosenbaum plots his course.

It is a disturbing journey, and not just because of the subject matter. The more that he explains, and investigates, the more is left unexplained. Hitler's personal history is a warren of dark corners and secrets, each of which has been at one time or another elevated into the secret "key" to his psyche: the mystery of his grandfather and the family name, the strange relationship with his nieces and the circumstances of her "suicide", his sexual life, war service, the time in Vienna - nothing seems certain. The documentation is all deeply suspect, including the vast dossier prepared by the Office of Strategic Services, forerunner of the CIA. To some extent Rosenbaum provides an archaeology of these grey facts, each of which is as unreliable as the evidence that it is based upon. "I was almost literally digging in that last carton of OSS documents," he says.

In his farthest reach backwards into Hitlerian history, he seeks the village of Dollersheim, where Hitler's grandmother became pregnant by someone. The father's name on the birth certificate is blank, and the candidates have varied between a close relative and one of the Rothschilds. In the deep Austrian midwinter, he finds nothing but a ruined landscape, the villages having been destroyed by either the Germans or the Russians, depending on which source he consults. There is nothing to rely on, nothing upon which to found a theory, but ruins and rumours.

After a decade in the morass of Hitler scholarship, Rosenbaum himself emerges ultimately unconvinced, unable quite to get a grasp on the man. "The more I spent examining these ques-



Evil

The century's most reviled figure remains its greatest mystery. Perhaps we prefer Adolf Hitler that way. Better to think of him as a one-dimensional genocidal maniac. Better still not to think of him at all. But the author Ron Rosenbaum believes Hitler has been out of mind too long. We must discover how the child grew into the monster. If we do not, how can we understand the darkest side of human nature?

tions the less confident I felt of the answers," he says. "It is troubling to spend 10 years and think that there may not be an ultimate answer."

Sometimes he seems paralysed by self-doubt, as he speaks and as he writes. He is Jewish, as he duly notes in the book. "As I was examining the agenda of the explainers, I didn't want to conceal my cards on the table," he says, and that has led him to interrogate himself on his researches. "I do wonder... whether my own background influences my view of it." Others whom he met have not always been so scrupulous.

Faced with such vast, deliberate destruction of human life, it seems that uncertainty is, in a way, the only rational response. But everyone else Rosenbaum spoke to during the decade fall that they had certainty in the palm of their hand, he says, including Simon Wiesenthal, the veteran Nazi-hunter who is convinced that Hitler caught a sexual disease from a Jewish prostitute in Vienna. As Rosenbaum points out, there is not a shred of evidence for this, or any explanation why it should drive a man to genocide, and yet Wiesenthal is rock solid in his conviction.

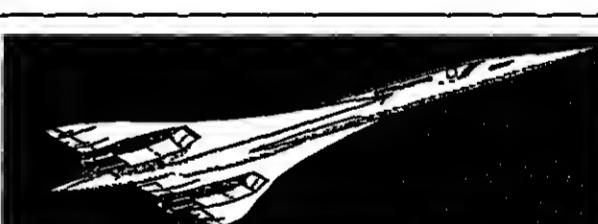
"Everyone has a theory. Everyone feels they have the answer," he says. He himself does not.

And yet if there is one thing that shines through, it is that Rosenbaum wants to resurrect evil, to return it to us as a concrete fact of life. Modern history has tended increasingly to judge Hitler as the nexus of forces far greater than him. "A lot of people who have studied Hitler are reluctant to think of him as evil," he says. But as he admires the endless theories - the "billy goat bite theory" (that part of Hitler's penis was bitten off), the dark family mysteries and so on - it is hard not agree that as more is explained, the act of murder on a vast scale becomes obscured. As we explain away human personality - reduce it to biology, or some obscure set of Freudian desires - we demean it, we demean ourselves and we demean those who have suffered at the hands of others.

Rosenbaum sums up his own intentions in terms of negatives and oppositions, of resistance to certain ideas and moral attractions. "Not to resist all or any enquiry, not to resist thought," he says with a dry smile.

but to resist the misleading explanatory corollaries of explanation. To resist the way explanations can become evasion or consolation, a way of making Hitler's choice to do what he did less unbearable, less hateful to contemplate, by shifting responsibility from him to faceless abstractions, inexorable forces, or irresistible compulsions that gave him no choice... To resist making the kind of explanatory excuses for Hitler that permit him to escape, that grant him the posthumous victory of a last laugh."

He seems dark, depressed by his own labours. "It's taken me some time to recover from the close proximity to these kind of dark matters," he says. "It has been difficult to recover a sense of perspective." He is also troubled by the uncertainty of his results. He confesses that sometimes he thinks, "Maybe you should spend 10 more years." He is toying with another project, on another individual regarded as outside the normal continuum of human activity. William Shakespeare. "It would be a relief to... study the greatest and most inspiring products of civilisation," he says with a dry smile.



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Islamic marriage

Sir: It should be clearly pointed out that "forced marriages" are not allowed in Islam ("Huge rise in forced marriages", 20 July). The free and willing consent of both a man as prospective husband and a woman as prospective wife are a condition of a valid marriage. The Prophet Muhammad advised prospective spouses to see each other's faces to allow the natural forces of emotion and attraction to take root.

Any violation of this basic principle goes against the grain of the Islamic Sharia and is unjust. If something is unjust, it cannot be Islamic. Also, if something is immoral and obscene, it cannot be Islamic. If something is harmful to the individual and society, it is not sanctioned by Islam.

The purpose of Islam is to make marriage easy for people and to lay down the conditions where married life can be enjoyed to the fullest. Clearly, not all marriages, whether "love" or "arranged" marriages, prove to be happy and Islam makes it easy, recommending reconciliation procedures for either party to terminate an intolerable marriage. Contrary to the impression given in *The Independent*, a woman has the right to seek dissolution of a marriage. A woman at the time of the Prophet had her marriage dissolved even though she affirmed that her husband was a good and pious man. She just did not like him.

There are no doubt abuses of Islamic requirements by Muslims but the provisions of the law are there to eliminate abuses and injustice. Judges should be alive to these purposes of the law and people like Yasmin, if the story told is true, should be able to seek proper redress. We should not, however, assume that lurking in the breast of every Muslim parent of a teenage daughter is a repressive monster. Parents are sensitive and worry about the happiness of their children.

ABDULWAHID HAMID
Media Committee, *The Muslim Council of Britain*
Harrow, Middlesex

IVF is last resort

Sir: I am a man of 33. I can think of hundreds of material reasons why I can live without children. However, along with the majority of human beings, I realise the satisfaction and purpose in my life is to be found through bringing up another person into this world. Unfortunately, nature has decreed that this is not possible.

My wife and I have therefore decided to commission an expert to create one for us. We cannot be cured but our expert can circumvent the problem. With the assistance of a middle man we have replaced old-fashioned sex. My wife, instead, can enjoy the physical and mental discomfort of daily injections, hormone treatment, regular vaginal scans, enemas and ultimately physical egg collection. I merely have the joy of producing sperm to order in a cubicle-sized room (will my child lack a sense of identity because I was looking at the *Mirafair* baby of the month and not my wife?).

If we are lucky our sperm and egg will be fertilised in a petri dish. Then the fertilised egg can be replaced into my wife. At this stage nature takes over again and there is only a 25 per cent chance of pregnancy occurring. This means, in all probability, we will go through this experience another three times.

What on earth is Jacqueline Laing ("What's love got to do with it?", 21 July) getting at? We know we have no right to a child, just as we have no right to a long healthy life. However, we do have a right to make use of the medical advances available. There will always be difficult moral questions on the edge of science.

IVF is a desperately difficult experience and to suggest that couples who have to resort to this route are just looking for a commodity or have been taken in

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Post letters to Letters to the Editor and include a daytime telephone number, fax to 0171 293 2056 or e-mail to letters@independent.co.uk. E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity



Continuing our series on Butlin's Somerwest World, two redcoats apply their make-up for a lunchtime show in the Crazy Horse Saloon Bar. John Voss

Like all photographs published in *The Independent*, this can be purchased by calling Independent Photographs on 0171-293 2534 (subject to availability)

by the sales talk is deeply insulting.

JOHN JOSEPH
Teddington, Middlesex

Colonial frontiers

Sir: Once more we see images of starvation and despair from southern Sudan. They are so familiar because of the unwillingness of the Organisation of African Unity to redraw colonial frontiers.

Over the last 40 years, millions have died in wars in Biafra, Katanga, Eritrea and Sudan about the independence of ethnic minorities. If people in Juba do not want government from Khartoum, why should they be forced to accept it? Without government by consent there is no hope of controlling militias, so the application of democratic principles should be required here as in other parts of the world.

This would mean the UN taking on what the OAU should have done many years ago – to convene a conference at which claims to redraw boundaries can be worked through, on the principle of mutual consent.

PAUL KELLY
London E9

B6 ban outrage

Sir: I was delighted to see the Agriculture Select Committee's report on vitamin B6, but I was horrified to read (report, 20 July) that Jack Cunningham, the Minister of Agriculture, has convinced the Prime Minister to go ahead with the plans to ban large doses of Vitamin B6.

Is this outrageous action yet another example of a minister flouting proper procedures? I was under the impression that Ministry of Agriculture officials had not yet made their final recommendations to the minister

and that the minister had not yet formally responded to the select committee's report. How then can it be that at this early stage, decisions are already being made which fly in the face of a cross-party committee's advice? I can only assume that Mr Cunningham has been partaking of that other contentious foodstuff – beef on the bone.

IAN BOND
Benenden, Kent

Workers' rights

Sir: You report (6 July) the suggestion that businesses could be made more liable for unfair dismissal and other obligations toward the workers of outside contractors under proposals in the Government's *Fairness at Work* White Paper. The suggestion is both alarmist and total nonsense.

Our White Paper proposes a

new power enabling the Government to give suitable employment rights to those workers who do not have them because their relationship with their work provider does not constitute a contract of employment. This would clear up any doubts about people's employment status in relation to their work provider. It would not make anyone else liable.

At present many vulnerable "atypical" workers slip through the safety net of employment rights. The Government is concerned to ensure that decent minimum standards apply to all. It is in the interests of both employers and employees that greater flexibility in working patterns and contractual arrangements is reflected in the employment rights legislation.

The White Paper makes it clear that the Government would carry out full public consultation on the

detail of any changes before exercising the proposed new power.

LAN McCARTNEY MP
Minister of State
Department of Trade and Industry
London SW1

Engineers ignored

Sir: It was refreshing to read the letter from C J E Morris (17 July).

One waits in vain for the media to give engineers and engineering the recognition they deserve.

Editors and programme makers simply do not understand that much of what is reported as scientific achievement is either the work of engineers or is only made possible by advances in engineering. Electron microscopes, interplanetary probes, particle accelerators and great telescopes are all classic examples of wonderful

engineering without which great science could not be done. On a more down-to-earth level, engineering has brought us the communications revolution, information technology, safe air and land transport, many of the tools of modern medicine and all of the technology which underpins economic progress and is mostly taken for granted.

Why is the latest exhibition of non-art at the Tate thought to be so much more interesting?

It is no accident that the economy is becoming seriously short of high-calibre engineers. Schools do not understand engineering, the media do not

understand engineering, and other professions are glamorised *ad infinitum* in television series.

DR ALAN CRIBBENS
Belper, Derbyshire

Tsunami warning

Sir: A 10-metre high tidal wave, or tsunami, triggered by an undersea earthquake some 30 kilometres offshore has killed 3,000 people in Papua New Guinea. This was unpredictable and unavoidable.

An oceanic asteroid or comet impact could produce a tsunami as high as the impactor's own diameter – up to one kilometre high. Such an event would destroy most cities on Earth.

This is not unpredictable; a worldwide space tracking programme, costing maybe £10m per year, could detect over 90 per cent of potential impactors within 10 years, and then keep them tracked, giving us months, or in some cases, years of warning.

We should take the tsunami of *Papua* as a miniature warning of the eventual price of ignoring our celestial environment, and prepare to take our place in the wider Universe!

MICHAEL MARTIN-SMITH
Hull

Curb the car

Sir: Your editorial (21 July) argues that the Government's proposed charge on car parking spaces will just be passed on to the consumer or the employee. This ignores the most obvious response to the tax, which is to cut parking provision and use the space more productively.

The CBI headquarters in London recently reduced its parking provision by half after discovering how much it cost on the rate bill. A transparent tax on parking would stimulate many more businesses to rationalise the space they give for cars.

Many people commute into central areas by car because they are assured of a free parking space at the end of their journey. If they were less certain of this public transport would become a more attractive option. Far from being a blunt instrument, as some have described it, a charge on workplace parking spaces is a very targeted, journey-specific measure.

CHRIS HEWITT
Research Fellow
Institute for Public Policy Research
London WC1E

Sir: In the debate this week about the car culture, the root cause of our traffic problems is rarely mentioned. That is, that we now tend to live miles away from our place of work. One- or two-hour drives to work are commonplace, whereas 50 years ago most people lived within walking distance of their work. Public transport alone is not going to correct this problem as most people now live more than one public transport stop away from work.

The only thing that is going to solve the UK's traffic problem is a major shift in our habits of choosing where to live. This could take 50 years. People are unlikely to start living closer to their work unless there is some financial imperative to do so.

PAUL WALTER
Newbury, Berkshire

Sir: There is one measure that would solve the problem of road congestion at one very easy and incredibly cheap stroke. It would save huge sums for industry and the trade balance, save a great number of lives, save vast amounts of road maintenance and at the same time provide an enormous boost to rail travel for both people and goods.

Unfortunately it would probably spark a genuinely classless revolution. It is, of course, to impose a speed limit of 30mph on all motorways and a 20mph limit everywhere else. Engine sizes would fall, pollution drop and we'd all go by train or bike.

TONY MICHAELS
London NW3

Sir: Of course the Deputy Prime Minister ("He came by tube, he left by car... the man who'll make drivers pay", 21 July) does not travel everywhere by tube, bus or even executive bicycle for that matter! I, for one, would be very disappointed if his work rate on our behalf was subject to the vagaries of public transport. This does not undermine the value of this hugely important policy initiative one little bit.

MICHAEL LEE-WRIGHT
London SE1

Send for a real tsar

Sir: Come on! Everyone knows that the exemplary tsar referred to in such phrases as "drugs tsar" (letter, 21 July) was not the gentle Nicholas II but Peter the Great, a man who really knew how to kick ass and get things done. In the case of drug dealers he would have had them publicly flogged to death *en masse* before beheading their corpses and flinging the remains into the Volga. In view of this, "drugs pussy-foot" might be a more appropriate description of the modern job.

ROGER PAYNE
Belper, Derbyshire

Sexy headline writer gets my wife steamed up, says Miles

WHEN MY wife was working for BBC TV in Bristol, she made a documentary on the world of prostitution in and around Bristol, and I don't think I have ever seen her so constantly cross and upset. She hated the economic background that drove a lot of the girls on the streets. She was furious at the violence and blackmail practised by the pimps on their girls. She found the obtuseness of the police maddening. She was above all infuriated by the stupidity of the laws, passed by ignorant or uncaring white middle-class males in Parliament, which made what the girls did a crime but let the male customers off the hook.

The last time I saw her cross in the same sort of way was yesterday, when she picked up a *Daily Telegraph* and saw the headline:

"Childminder Who Killed Baby Was A Prostitute".

"What is that meant to mean?"

she demanded. "Childminder... Babykiller... Prostitute... What message are we meant to pick up from that? That a girl who has been a prostitute is more likely to kill babies? That if you have ever been a prostitute, you are unfit to look after children? I met young girls in Bristol who had gone on the game simply because they had young children to support and could find no other way of getting the money to do it. They had actually become prostitutes to make a better job of looking after children! Do you think the headline-writer of the *Daily Telegraph* had thought of that?"

Gulp. No, I didn't. I am sure the headline-writer thought of what headline-writers always think of.

Can I get a dreadful pun in? 2. Can I make the story sound sexy?

The best way to make a story sound sexy and wicked is to put two words in which seem to clash.

"Vice" and "virtue", for instance.

"Police" and "corruption". "Priest"

and "abuse". "Government" and

"apologise". "England cricketers"

and "win"... So "childminder" and "prostitute" sound good together – the trusted lady who looks after our children twinned with the wicked, wicked woman who is the scum of society.

Except, of course, that it doesn't add up when you start to think about it. Prostitutes are, I would guess, unusually law-abiding. The rules are stacked against them so much that they have to be extra-careful not to break them. When they get involved in crime – real

crime, not the pathetic bureaucratic regulation-breaking of prostitution – it is not something they do, but

something that is done to them.

Prostitutes are occasionally beaten up, even murdered. They do not go in for violence and murder themselves. I cannot ever remember reading a case in which a prostitute was accused of murder.

Child-minders, yes, and nannies, and au pairs, and nurses, and even children themselves. They quite often find themselves accused of murder. Was Louise Woodward a nanny or a prostitute? Were the women found guilty of murder in Saudi Arabia nurses or prostitutes? If I were to be wary of any profession it would have to be of the caring professions, those people who look after children and old people and sick people, and who tend to adopt murder as a hobby in a way which prostitutes don't.

Incidentally, while we are on the

subject of knee-jerk reactions, the annual display of Edinburgh Festival shock horror has started again. There is always an informal contest to see which new show at the Fringe can put out the sort of publicity which will outrage the locals and lead to a call for its banning.

I duly saw a *Daily Record* the other day which reported that a play based on Myra Hindley, going into the Gilded Balloon, had outraged local councillors. The *Daily Record* had also arranged for the mother of one of Hindley's victims to express outrage.

The usual storm in a teacup, in fact. Indeed, the play sounded pretty serious and unsensational to me. I haven't read it. Nor, it was clear, had the *Daily Record* or the councillor or the mother of Hindley's victim. What mattered was the

froth of shock, and horror, and outrage – the very idea that antisocial art could be based on something so wicked as a murderer who is still alive.

"I don't think it's that, actually," my wife said, when I showed her the piece about Myra Hindley, to take her mind off the *Daily Telegraph*. "It's the fact that it's a female murderer and one who killed children. Remember the fuss about Mary Bell? Extraordinary. Remember the fuss about the film based on Christie's *10 Rillington Place*?"

"There wasn't any fuss about it," I said.

"Exactly," she said. "It was a male murderer. Hence no fuss."

I'm not so sure. I think it was the fact that Christie had never been a prostitute.

**MILES KINGTON**

"Childminder Who Killed Baby Was A Prostitute" – what is meant to mean?

crime, not the pathetic bureaucratic regulation-breaking of prostitution – it is not something they do, but

John Voss

PANDORA

WOMEN IN JOURNALISM sipped lukewarm rose wine as the guests of Gordon Brown at a Tuesday evening reception held at 11 Downing Street. After a brief speech from the group's chairwoman, former Sunday Express editor Eve Pollard, the Chancellor soon had the hackelettes in stitches with a stand-up routine that disproved recent reports of his "dourness". Amongst Gordon's one-liners was a reference to Peter Mandelson "who we now call the Minister Between Portfolios". As for living next door to the Blair family, Gordon reported that he was growing accustomed to hearing "the sound of Oasis being played and of French being practised - all this before the kids get home from school." Has Stephen Fry been feeding him lines?

IT'S BEEN 50 years in the coming, but finally his time has come. Whose time? Noddy, of course. The impossibly insipid little fictional creation of Enid Blyton has finally been translated into Welsh, where his name is "Nodi". Long after versions have appeared in languages as far-flung as Japanese and Hebrew. Published by Sain in North Wales, under an agreement with Harper Collins, the first three "Nodi" books arrived in Welsh shops this week. Can national independence be far behind?

HOUSE OF COMMONS police were called out last Thursday to disperse an angry crowd of drinkers at the harshly lit Sports & Social Club bar, located in the bowels of Parliament. This followed the new landlord's decision to ban anyone who is not a member after 8pm. Frequented by everyone from researchers to Members, it costs just £3 to join the club, which stays open until the House rises. Now Black Rod has been asked to adjudicate. His verdict: "Any guests before 8pm are welcome to stay for as long as they like, but no new guests can enter after 8pm." Pandora hears that some regulars are not satisfied with this ruling. Perhaps a visit from formidable Speaker Betty Boothroyd is the only way to sort out this rambunctious lot.

The fetching young actress Liv Tyler (right) has been doing some unusual gardening, according to American GQ in its August issue. This is the same



problems. Our quarrel is with luggage louts who refuse to behave courteously in crowded public spaces. 'Just take it off' is our motto.

infamous issue which includes a sophomoric spoof of Britain featuring a mocked-up photo of the Queen in a g-string.

Tyler tells GQ's reporter about attending the birth of her boyfriend Joaquin Phoenix's sister, including her fascination, for some reason, with the placenta. "What an outrageous thing," she reports with scintillating acumen. "It's heavy, like a brain. We kept it and put it in the yard with a tree, which I thought was a really sweet idea." Ton had they didn't bury the magazine with it.

YES, IT'S WEIRD. Agents Scully and Mulder of *The X-Files* have been hijacked by the evangelical street-preaching group Jews for Jesus. They appear in an unauthorised comic strip in one of the protestant pamphlets which JJF hand out on pavements around the world, including London.

A Mulder caricature tells a fake Scully that he's found evidence of an extraterrestrial ancient called Y-shua - the Hebrew name for Jesus - who lived in Bethlehem. As always, Agent Scully is quick to pour cold rationality on Mulder's burning enthusiasm. She tells him, "You're talking about the Jewish Messiah... And he's no hoax."

Any copyright problems with this? Not according to David Brickner, a spokesman for Jews for Jesus, because "we're not making any money on this". But are they making any friends?

ALTHOUGH THE VAST majority of letters received by the Anti-Rucksack On The Tube Campaign are positive, we do receive the occasional piece of hate mail. One of our most persistent critics is a gentleman from West Yorkshire who lauds rucksacks for having cured his lower back pain. "If you persist in your campaign to drive rucksack users into cars... or to return to their briefcases, you will have a lot to answer for," writes Michael Atkinson somewhat ominously.

Once again, Sir, let us assure you that the Campaign has no desire to force rucksack users to abandon public transport. Nor are we unsympathetic to your chronic back

problems. Our quarrel is with luggage louts who refuse to behave courteously in crowded public spaces. 'Just take it off' is our motto.

PITY THE POOR ASIAN girl, trying to survive in permissive England yet continually under threat from the dark forces of Indian or Pakistani society...

After reports that the number of young second-generation Asian women being forced into unwanted marriages is rising, investigations have mostly been led by Caucasian journalists. Their attempts to uncover what they believe to be the ghastly traditions of "Asian society" have obscured the truth about what is going on.

They must realise that, as in England, there is a roughly three-tiered class system in South East Asia. The six-level "caste" divisions are the stuff of history or legend, akin to the intricate feudal structures of medieval England; the modern system follows patterns similar to those currently effective in the West.

The upper classes can live by their own codes, operating in many ways above the law.

The middle classes, by far the biggest group, comprise intellectuals and artists - basically the bourgeoisie - who can criticise the ideological bases of society. They are



BIDISHA

An arranged marriage is no different from, and a lot safer than, placing an ad in 'Time Out'

forward-thinking and outward-looking, and have easily assimilated the best aspects of all cultures.

Women marry at roughly the same age as their English counterparts, living away from home and studying or working until then.

They are not exactly torn from their bedsides and dragged to their own surprise wedding parties at the age of 20.

If they opt for an arranged mar-

riage, which some do, their parents, family members and friends (the people who know them best) search for suitable suitors. There is no coercion, no force, no blackmail.

Willing gentlemen are delivered to the girl's door for her delectation or rejection. She might meet someone she likes, or she might change her mind about the whole thing. It is no different from, and a lot safer than, placing a lonely hearts ad in *Time Out*.

The lowest classes, in both the East and West, are seen as the principal sites of unreconstructed and extremist politics on matters of sexuality, race and religion (such as the alleged killers of Stephen Lawrence, or American anti-abortion/anti-gay protesters). It is people from this class, and this class only, who are forcing some girls into unwanted marriages.

For all the sob stories that the press adores printing, there is an entire generation of Asian women, both in the East and in England, who get on well with their families, have friends of both sexes, great job prospects and a cultural heritage that includes Indian novels, Amer-

ican films and British art. That there has been an increased number of attempted forced marriages illustrates the disjunction in attitudes between second- and first-generation Asians.

The difference is that the latter group now have more power, autonomy and legal rights than their parents' group; the current strife is just the cultural fall-out attendant upon the establishment of second-generation Asians in Britain.

One further problem remains, however: coverage of the issue has revealed the deep underlying racism of the Western press. Writers making huge generalisations about what goes on in "Asian culture" and "the Asian community" have an offensively limited notion of life in India or Pakistan.

The India or Pakistan of the Western image is a rural, primitive settlement governed by tyrannical heads of households and uncles. It is a place where women's sexuality and autonomy are brutally repressed, and where any defection from the code of family loyalty or honour is ruthlessly punished.

That sounds nothing like the

India I have been visiting for two months every year of my life, a country which is the premier site of global IT expertise, where young male and female university students sit in coffee houses and discuss books or take a train into town to catch a film or buy clothes and records.

Of course, in tiny villages, far from any major cities, some forced marriages may happen. People who live in places like that do not want to change their attitudes or question themselves. Yet one must consider the obvious parallels between such attitudes in the East and those English villages whose inhabitants jaws drop at the sight of a black person on the street, or the families who would balk at the prospect of their little girl bringing home an Asian boyfriend.

Simply put: tyranny, misogyny, xenophobia and patriarchy are not race-specific. The Western press may love to fetishise the denigration of young women's rights in Asia, yet it must also be said that England is clocking up a fabulous history of abuse of youths in care, child pornography and paedophilia.

Forget about inflation - price stability is here to stay

WE SEEM to live in a world where financial power is located not with politicians but with central bankers, and no member of that fraternity appears more powerful than Alan Greenspan, chairman of the Federal Reserve.

So the immediate reaction of many people on both sides of the Atlantic to the warning this week from Dr Greenspan that interest rates might have to go up is that this is not simply another example of the way in which democracy is in thrall to bankers. It is also an example of the monastic quest for the virtue of price stability, to which the followers of the central banking faith devote their lives.

Actually Dr Greenspan has been less fundamentalist than many of his followers. He has resisted the pressure in the US to increase interest rates in the face of budding inflationary fears on the grounds that this danger has to be balanced against the danger that the economic disruption in East Asia might spread to the rest of the world. All he has been doing this week is signalling a possible shift of emphasis in the future. By contrast, the Bank of England's monetary committee has attracted considerable flak for pushing up interest rates. Its one member who has been seeking a reduction in rates, DeAnne Julius, has become the heroine of British manufacturing.

Ms Julius is the lone dove at the Bank of England. The dove/hawk balance at the Federal Reserve has long been a subject of analysis in the US, but recently this practice has spread to the UK and to continental Europe. So members of the Bank's monetary committee are given hawk/mouse rankings; and now that the members of the European Central Bank board are known, they too are being graded for their



HAMISH MCRAE

We are in the middle of a revolution, one that occurs only every couple of hundred years

ferocity. (If you are interested, preliminary estimates suggest the custodians of the euro will be even more hawkish than the council of the Bundesbank.)

But wait a minute, something is happening here which is vastly bigger than the decisions over quarter per cent changes in interest rates in a few developed countries. Dr Greenspan's views about interest rates and the decisions by the Bank of England catch the headlines, but these are just tremors on the surface. Deep, deep down there is a giant seismic movement taking place - the shift between a world of inflation and one of stable prices.

It can be very hard when you are in the middle of a revolution to realise quite what is happening, but we are, I think, in the middle of one now, one that occurs only every couple of hundred years. If you look back over 75 years at price movements in England (yes, the data exists), there have been long periods of price stability interspersed by periodic surges in inflation.

The surges occurred in the 18th

century with the discovery of gold and silver in the Americas; during the Napoleonic Wars, which were financed by heavy government borrowing; and since the Second World War. Between these great inflations there were long periods, lasting up to two centuries, when prices were broadly stable. In any one year, or even decade, they jumped about; but in the longer term, the pluses were balanced out by the minuses. At the end of each of the great inflations - in the first half of the 17th and 19th centuries - there was an awkward adjustment from inflation to stability. We are now in the middle of just such an adjustment following the post-1945 inflation.

It is an awkward time (though arguably less awkward than the period we have all lived through, when inflation was endemic) partly because our past experience is no guide to the future, but also because the transition does not necessarily take place in a smooth, orderly way. It would be nice if it did, but I don't think we know enough about the causes of inflation, or the correct response to it, to be able to manage the transition in the optimal way.

The image of Dr Greenspan and his ilk as all-powerful experts able to adjust prices and economic activity is flawed. They are scrambling along behind something that is much bigger than they are, trying to understand it and trying not to make mistakes in their own response.

For the shift is not taking place because of the decisions of central bankers. Insofar as we understand it at all, it is taking place because of a combination of the power of savers and the power of globalisation. True,

there are structural changes taking place in the world economic system - in particular, greater independence being given to central banks, and pressure on governments to balance their budgets - which reinforce the process. But you have to ask why are countries giving more independence to central banks and why are they squeezing down public sector deficits? Answer: the penalties for not doing so are greater.

If governments do not behave in what savers deem to be a "responsible" way, they are clobbered by savers. Long-term interest rates rise, capital runs out of the country or fails to come in. Companies stop investing, employment falls. We

really do know how to make a mess of an economy, and in a world where both information and capital cross

national boundaries with the speed of light, any government that is making a serious mess is swiftly punished. Sooner or later the penny drops, and a government either mends its ways or is headed out.

So it is not Dr Greenspan who is exercising power. He (like all the other central bankers) is merely the physical face representing vastly deeper forces. His job is to judge these forces correctly, responding with the one weapon that is in his



How important are central bankers like Alan Greenspan?

ance their budgets - which reinforce the process. But you have to ask why are countries giving more independence to central banks and why are they squeezing down public sector deficits?

If governments do not behave in what savers deem to be a "responsible" way, they are clobbered by savers. Long-term interest rates rise, capital runs out of the country or fails to come in. Companies stop investing, employment falls. We

really do know how to make a mess of an economy, and in a world where both information and capital cross national boundaries with the speed of light, any government that is making a serious mess is swiftly punished. Sooner or later the penny drops, and a government either mends its ways or is headed out.

So it is not Dr Greenspan who is exercising power. He (like all the other central bankers) is merely the physical face representing vastly deeper forces. His job is to judge these forces correctly, responding with the one weapon that is in his

armoury: control over short-term interest rates.

It is a very difficult transition to manage, and so far the US seems to have managed not too badly. By contrast, Japan has managed it rather poorly and (with the added bad luck of recession elsewhere in its time zone) has plunged itself into a serious recession. Britain managed the transition pretty badly in the early 1990s, making the opposite mistake to Japan (excessive inflation instead of excessive deflation), but ending up with a similar outcome.

Yes, power has shifted from politicians to central bankers. But remember that they are only the intermediaries - the front - for something that is deeper and beyond their ken. I'm not saying we should feel sorry for them: perish the thought. Let them have their moment in the sun. It's just that we are being a touch naive when we hang on their every word. They matter, sure, but they are not that important, certainly by comparison with the forces that they are attempting to control.

An innovative strategy for the arts

ON FRIDAY the broad

allocation of arts funding will be announced for a period of three years to provide the stability which all arts organisations need in order to make proper plans for the amount of public funding they will receive to put beside their other sources of income. Last Tuesday the Chancellor announced plans for the next two years. That involves an extra £290 million over the period to 2002. That is a significant increase in real terms.

There is not too much mileage in the concept of an integrated arts strategy. I tried to think what an integrated arts strategy for the United Kingdom might involve. I wondered whether it was a strategy for integrating arts funding, for example, in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. I wondered whether there was some concept of integration of strategy across different art forms, but I detect some resistance to that, which I share.

I shall not speculate on the analogy between an integrated arts policy and an integrated transport policy. Transport is about moving people and things around. If there are dif-

ferent modes of doing that, integration is likely to make transport policy more efficient. I do not think the analogy with the arts works particularly well, even for what I was interested to hear called a broadly socialist government.

Without following the route of integration, we can say a few things about the way in which we approach arts policy, even if they do not define any particular decisions on the allocation of resources.

The first is rather obvious. I refer to the promotion of access for the many, not just the few. We want access to museums and galleries not only because of numbers. It is because the arts have the power to illuminate and transform us all for the better that we want as many people as possible to share that experience.

We could define our strategy as being the pursuit of excellence and innovation. Some people seem to think that by "innovation" we mean something that is politically correct. That is not the case at all. With respect, I do not think that the Prime Minister's taste in pop music has anything to do with arts strategy. He likes

what he likes, and I do not happen to agree with him. But we shall not be determining our policy on our particular proclivities.

Even if he likes Oasis and I do not know whether he does - he is not, for that reason, saying that Oasis is more worthy than opera. We have to pursue excellence in a wide range of art forms. Some may well be popular forms as well as highbrow.

It is true that the education system engenders the creativity on which the arts depend. Unless effective artistic teaching of all kinds can be restored in our schools, what we do about access to museums and galleries, concerts and theatre will not be effective.

It is widely recognised that unless we get reading and writing correct in the first place, everything else will suffer. It means that we shall need to give our schools more flexibility in arts teaching. It does not mean that we are downgrading arts education.

Clearly, what we can do for the arts in general is dependent on the amount of money available from the National Lottery. Very large amounts of lottery money have been spent on the arts - over £1bn. The new Lottery Bill will not mean that money will be diverted from the arts. On the contrary, it means that lottery funding will now be used for people, not merely for bricks and mortar.

The new audiences fund is targeted to help arts organisations extend their audiences, to bring new people to the arts, to encourage young people in particular and to broaden their experience in different

art forms. We set up the £5m fund at the time of the last Budget.

On access to museums and galleries, I accept that there has been a significant decline in the number of people visiting galleries as a result of charges. If any way can be found to reverse that, we must certainly look for it.

No proposals have been put to the Government by the British Library for charging readers. If they were, it would not be up to the British Library Under the British Libraries Act, it would be for the Secretary of State to decide whether charges should be made.

Even though there is a great deal of devolution of arts policy, there is at the same time a good deal of cross-country funding and collaboration.

We do not have any view that the arts should all be treated the same or that there should be a rigid Procrustean bed of artistic strategy. Nevertheless the concern not only of my department but of the whole of government for public funding of the arts has never diminished, will not diminish and indeed can be expected to increase.

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This glass instrument should not be confused with some cheaper synthetic models on the market.

Women

The luckiest man in the world


ANDREW MARSHALL

Everyone wonders at Clinton's luck, how long it can hold and what happens when it runs out

BILL CLINTON is one of the most fortunate men ever to sit in the White House. He certainly thinks so. "I've been the luckiest person in the world. The American people have continued to support me in the face of unprecedented attacks," he told reporters at a fund-raiser back home in Arkansas at the weekend.

Everybody in politics wonders at that luck, at how much longer it can hold and what it will mean when it finally runs out. As his long investigation draws to a close, Kenneth Starr, the Witchfinder General of Washington, is closing in on the President and Monica Lewinsky.

The Republican-dominated Congress is busily rewriting his legislative priorities, making it hard for anything meaningful to come out of the White House. And later this year Congressional elections are likely to see the President's party fail to retake either house of Congress.

After the mid-terms, the President becomes a lame duck, simply sitting out the time until retirement and the opening of the William J Clinton Memorial Library. Starting this summer, the political obituaries will begin, Monica or no Monica.

But don't count him out just yet. There is a persistent tendency, in Britain and in America, to underestimate Mr Clinton. Washington is littered with bitter, frustrated people who have failed to appreciate his sheer ability to survive, and turn survival into triumph.

The conservatives have been blazing away at him for years now with all guns, pouring fire at every aspect of his presidency and painting him as the worst traitor, philanderer and liar ever to grace the capital. (There is, it must be said, stiff competition.) Yet, every time, they are left shaking their fists impotently, shouting: "Curse you, Red Baron!" as he flies on. None of the accusations have stuck, so far; none of the investigations that have littered the courthouses and committee rooms have borne fruit.

Nor has the right managed to deliver a decisive political blow. After all, it was only four years ago, at the last mid-term elections, when it seemed that his luck was over, after a mere two years in office. With much of his agenda already in lat-



The factor above all others that has sustained Mr Clinton's political fortunes is the wave of public sentiment that has been generated by the economic boom Win McNamee

ters, the country elected Newt Gingrich and his fellow right-wing Republicans to control the House of Representatives, putting the end of Pennsylvania Avenue under enemy control. We were promised a revolution in American governance, and the end of the Clinton years before they had even begun.

It didn't happen, of course. Mr Gingrich proved too poor a politician, in terms of either strategy or tactics, to carry out his crusade. The population at large found him too difficult to accept, too ungainly, and just a bit too barmy. And anyway, they didn't want a revolution: they were too busy making money.

The factor above all others that has sustained Mr Clinton's political fortunes is the wave of public sentiment that has been generated by the economic boom. The American economy is motoring along as well as it has done since the Sixties, and people just aren't that bothered by the things that the politicians would like them to care about. Like politics. Things seem fine; why vote?

This "What, me, worry?" attitude

has put the President at the top of the opinion polls, and probably will keep him there.

You can call that luck, because

the man chiefly responsible is prob-

ably Alan Greenspan, the stony-faced chairman of the Federal Reserve, not the President. But Mr Clinton, who entered office determined to launch a massive programme of fiscal stimulus, was quickly persuaded instead to work with the bond market, not against it. The deficit reduction he put forward instead helped keep interest rates low, and propelled growth.

You can also call it luck that the Gingrich conservatives never got their act together. But Mr Clinton's strategy of triangulation - striking a course between the two parties - helped cut the ground from under them. The fact is that in politics you make your own luck, and throughout his career Mr Clinton has been highly skilled at turning it out in bucket loads. He has a tactical flair for politics the like of which few of his opponents will ever approach.

It is still possible that in the next few weeks, Mr Starr will deliver a killer blow in his fight to prove that the President and his aides conspired at perjury in the sexual harassment case of Paula Jones, but it looks a long bet. The legal complexities mean that it will probably take plenty of time before a clear position emerges; the public still isn't that interested; and the much-

touted appearance of the secret service agents may well turn out to be a damp squib. There is a significant risk, but the President's luck has held out this far.

In this year's elections, however, the right will probably do quite well. It looks increasingly unlikely that the Democrats will be able to win back the 11 seats in the House of Representatives that they need, even though polls show that more people support them than the Republicans. The same polls show that these people won't vote: they're not bothered enough.

The same general benevolence that keeps Mr Clinton high in the ratings virtually guarantees that Mr Gingrich and his Newtstars will come back in strength next year.

When turnout is low, the richer, middle-class voters with a flag to carry - anti-abortion, pro-religion conservatives - can still be relied upon.

So as the year goes on, the Republi-

cans will try to mobilise this force,

harness its votes and its money, and

use it to get a greater hold than they

have already on Congress.

Everything we know about the

President suggests that he is tem-

peramentally incapable of buck-

ing under the continuing pressure.

Mr Clinton is a man of tremendous

stamina and energy, who never knows when to stop working.

"His whole life is one long re-election campaign aimed at the Presidency. Everything he does has been shaped by that," said an Arkansas commentator way back in 1992, when he was nominated for the White House. In pursuit of that, he has had to compromise, to steer different courses from those he bad planned.

In 1993, when his team told him he had to start rethinking his approach to the budget, he became red with anger. "You mean to tell me that the success of my programme and my re-election hinges on the Federal Reserve and a bunch of bond traders?" he asked. It did, and he accommodated himself to that reality. In the same way, he "triangulated" after the 1994 Republican landslide, working between the Democrats and the Republicans. He can still make Washington work for him in the remaining two years of his Presidency.

In the end, neither luck nor political acumen have saved him from the enduring problems of the White House and American government. Perhaps that isn't fair, but if you think politics in America is about fairness, then I have some swampland property which you may find interesting.

government and a new willingness to experiment - in welfare reform, for instance. But although Mr Clinton may be a bridge-builder and may have resuscitated the Democrats, it looks as if he will leave behind him few substantial landmarks.

Increasingly, the President seems intent on ensuring that his deputy, Al Gore, moves from Vice-President to the Oval Office. Yet that seems no more than a vague hope. Mr Gore is by no means a live wire, despite his recent attempts to affect a sense of humour and the fact that he is widely recognised won't necessarily help.

To the right, the fact that Mr Clinton has survived at all seems monstrously unfair, a travesty of justice. To his own supporters, the gridlock that has prevented him from making his mark on the country also seems unfair, a denial of democracy.

In the end, neither luck nor political acumen have saved him from the enduring problems of the White House and American government. Perhaps that isn't fair, but if you think politics in America is about fairness, then I have some swampland property which you may find interesting.

RIGHT OF REPLY

ALAN YENTOB


The BBC's Director of Television defends the corporation's output

YOU MAY have been perplexed to see a programme called *42 Up* running over two nights on BBC 1 this week. The *7 Up* series, which has followed the lives of a class of individuals at seven-year intervals, is probably the most highly regarded documentary strand that ITV has ever carried. But for some curious reason they did not have enough space for it this time round. By a sweet irony, these documentaries have taken up residence in the heart of BBC 1's peak-time schedule only a week after ITV accused the BBC of failing in its public service obligation.

What other mainstream channel would have commissioned *The Human Body*, a landmark science series to which we dedicated six hours of BBC 1's viewing? Up to 8 million people now understand more about the workings of their own bodies than they ever have before.

The BBC's assailants this week have not been confined to rival broadcasters. In last Friday's *Independent*, Suzanne Moore objected, *inter alia*, that "the failure of the BBC this year to produce decent sitcoms, drama and arts programming is shameful". Shameful? The board of governors' report in fact said that, in an outstanding year, the BBC could still make some improvements. To admit that you could improve your drama output in a year in which you have won Bafta awards seems to me to suggest humility.

There is no cynicism in what we do. The licence fee may seem to be an anomaly but it has been a glorious one. It remains as a guarantee that the BBC is there for everyone. The whole point about the BBC is that it is not marginal to people's lives. In Huw Weldon's famous phrase, "we want to make the good popular and the popular good". We will never take that for granted.

Ireland, the magnet for writers



THURSDAY BOOKS

CRAZY JOHN AND THE BISHOP, AND OTHER ESSAYS ON IRISH CULTURE
BY TERRY EAGLETON. CORK UNIVERSITY PRESS. £14.95

THE REST IS HISTORY
BY GERALD DAWE, ABBEY PRESS. £7.95

TERRY EAGLETON is aware of the dangers inherent in any attempt to analyse Ireland, a place in which political passions run exceptionally high and faction flurishes. Any pronouncement is almost guaranteed to provoke outrage, misconstruction or some other kind of wild reaction on the part of someone or other. And, if a disinterested view is hard to achieve, it is even harder to put across. Whatever you say, your remarks will be pounced on by some hostile reader as evidence of fearfully suspect leanings. However, in spite of all that, Ireland as a topic for literary or social comment remains so fruitful, complex, pungent and absorbing that it is well-nigh irresistible - and never mind whether you are out of sync with the newest orthodoxy.

In fact, the forms of scrutiny to which Ireland is subject tend to go round in circles, as a revision of a revision of revisionism (or for some such amendment) gets incessantly underway. But the most compelling critics are always those in whom an independent shrewdness of outlook is not swamped by any preconception.

Eagleton is a case in point. Of course, we know - because he has told us - that he is politically on the left, sympathetic to the nationalist cause in Ireland, and not a fan of the revisionism that questions this cause. But an irrepressible ingenuity (among other qualities) keeps such beliefs from overburdening his commentaries. Generally, he is a plain speaker. In his new collection, only the title piece comes close to encompassing a kind of academic obfuscation. With Eagleton's next essay, entitled "The Good-Natured Gael", the tone tightens; and things stay lively throughout the rest of the book.

These essays (10 in all) cover aspects of Ireland not already tackled in *Heathciff* and *The Great Hunger* (1995), though Eagleton continues to

THURSDAY POEM

SHANTY
BY IAN DUHIG

Seven fly:
salmon feast.
Seven salmon:
seal feast.
Seven seal:
shark feast.
Seven shark:
whale feast.
Seven whale:
Norse feast.
Seven Norse:
fly feast.

Our poems today and tomorrow come from Ian Duhig's new collection, *'Minimis'*, published next week by Bloodaxe (£6.95)



Revealed: the *raison d'être* of the Van Morrison phenomenon

of them were torn between London's journalistic milieu and darkest Munster. "Home and Away" (subtitled "Internal Emigrés in the Irish Novel") expands the topic to consider disaffection and alienation in Irish fiction. Its few plot summaries make you thankful that you do not have to read the works in question ("His lover is Tully McCoolagh, a charismatic revolutionary leader who turns out to be a woman in a bowler hat").

An overestimation of the resolutely middlebrow and unironic writer, Kate O'Brien, is balanced by an appreciation of the mischievous social satirist, Mervyn Wall, among other fallacies and felicities. The book proceeds by way of creative contradiction (revealed in phrases such as "centrally peripheral" or "authentically inauthentic"), scholarship, insight and idiosyncrasy. It adds up to an intricate and ambitious exploration of literary byways.

When Eagleton complains about critics being jumped on, in certain circles, for declining to find the nationalist heritage in Ireland "universally bigoted and bankrupt", he

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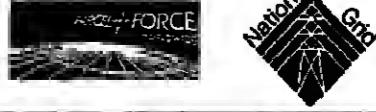
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Michael Denison

TALL AND urbane, Michael Denison was one of Britain's most respected gentlemen actors, who in his 60-year career had notable successes in theatre, film and television.

His lean handsomeness was complemented by his richly stentorian tones, unmistakably those of the English public school. His films included such hits as *My Brother Jonathan* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*, on television he starred for many years in the crime series *Boyd QC*, and his work on stage embraced both classic and modern theatre.

He and his wife Dulcie Gray formed one of the theatre's most distinguished acting partnerships and together held a special place in the hearts of the public. Next year they would have celebrated 60 years of marriage. In 1983 they were both appointed CBE, and earlier this year they completed a season as part of Peter Hall's acclaimed production of *An Ideal Husband*, which they performed in London and New York over a period of four years, and which proved a perfect showcase for their matchless comic style and timing.

Denison was born John Michael Terence Wellesley Denison in Doncaster, Yorkshire, in 1915, raised by an uncle and aunt (his mother had died three weeks after he was born) and educated at Harrow and Magdalen College, Oxford. His family wanted him to join the diplomatic service but at Harrow (where he fagged for the future playwright Terence Rattigan) he became interested in drama when asked by the school's prime actor, Dorian Williams (later the show-jumping commentator), to appear in a house play.

Though he acted in several shows at Harrow, it was during his time at Oxford reading Modern Languages that he decided on the theatre as a career. "In those days famous people of the theatre would give up time to work with the Oxford University Dramatic Society, such was its fame," Denison told me when I talked to him last year. "John Gielgud arrived to direct *Richard II*, bringing with him the young Vivien Leigh to play the Queen with Glen Byam Shaw to co-direct. I played three tiny parts, and was suddenly exposed to the very best of professional theatre. I decided then that, whether or not the theatre wanted me, I wanted the theatre."

More important roles with the Ouds followed, including Orlando in *As You Like It* with Nova Pilbeam as Rosalind, and Macduff in *Macbeth* with "a superb Lady Macbeth" by Margaret Rawlings. He went from university to the Webber-Douglas Drama School in London without having to audition. "Males were something of a rarity at the school in those days. When I appeared at their portals, they had seven men and 75 girls, so anything in trousers was practically hauled off the street."

In 1938, the Rev Alexander Mill in Shaw's *Candida* and Ghazan Khan in Eugene O'Neill's satire about Marco Polo, *Marco's Millions* (which was transmitted on BBC television in January 1939).

When Denison and Gray were both offered the security of a summer season with a repertory company in Aberdeen, they decided to get married, and did so on 29 April 1939. In Aberdeen the couple made their first joint stage appearance, as brother and sister in Noel Coward's *Hay Fever*. They returned to the London stage to star in Priestley's play *Music at Night* (1939), and Denison was given his first film role in *Tilly of Bloomsbury* (1940), but his acting career was shortly to be interrupted by the Second World War - he served in the Army Intelligence Unit from 1940 to 1946, during which time his wife achieved fame on stage and screen.

An extraordinary coincidence was to give Denison's post-war career a major boost. In 1942, while on leave, he had accompanied Gray to the studio to watch her do a screen test, and in the absence of an actor to play the scene with her had filled in. Four years later, Associated

British Pictures were planning to film Francis Brett Young's popular novel *My Brother Jonathan* but were having difficulty casting the prime role of the idealistic young doctor, Jonathan. The casting director told Gray, who was being considered for the role of the heroine, that he had been looking through old tests and had been impressed by the young man who had acted with her but had not been able to find out his name - did she know who he might be? Denison was subsequently tested for the film and given a long-term contract.

He played the small part of brother to Dennis Price in *Hungry Hill* (1946) and returned to the West End stage in Priestley's *Ever Since Paradise* (1946) while waiting for production to start on *My Brother Jonathan*, which was to become the most popular British film of 1947. Denison's sincere portrayal of the GP fighting abuses of medical care in the West Midlands establishing him as a major film star. Another film success followed, *The Glass Mountain* (1948), in which Denison played an opera composer. With the singing of Tito Gobbi, popular theme music by Nino Rota, and location shooting in Venice, where the opera scenes were shot inside the Teatro La Fenice, it has become a perennial favourite.

On stage Denison and Gray co-starred in two comedies, *Queen Elizabeth Slept Here* (1949) and Jan de Hartog's two-character play *The Fourposter* (1950), but were unable to accept an offer to take the latter to New York because of film commitments. He and Gray starred in an enjoyable film version of Josephine Tey's *The Franchise Affair* (1959) and a popular war story of fighter pilots stationed in Kent, *Angels One Five* (1952).

Anthony Asquith's stylish film version of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1952) remains a joy because of its collection of marvellous performances including Edith Evans's legendary Lady Bracknell and Denison's captivatingly mischievous Algernon. His wife's gift for impishly droll comedy was displayed in the next film she and Denison made together, *There was a Young Lady* (1952). Though the Denisons frequently appeared together they also believed in having separate careers. "We've never said, if you want one of us you've got to have the other," said Denison. "It's worked out oddly enough, that in all media we've done about 60 per cent of our work together."

In 1955 Denison spent a season with the Stratford Memorial Theatre ("My heart's desire" - with Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh in plays directed by Gielgud and Byam Shaw - many echoes of Oxford in 1936 and a first step towards creating the film star image.) The following year Denison was cast as a suave harridan in a six-episode



Denison with Dulcie Gray. They met at drama school and married in 1939

television show, *Boyd QC*, which proved so popular that it ran for nine years and 80 episodes (the first 40 transmitted live). So successful was the series in Australia that when Denison went there to star in *My Fair Lady* (1962), the newspaper headlines shouted "Boys Here To Play Higgins".

In 1966 Denison and Gray starred in a production of *An Ideal Husband* that was less well received critically than the more recent one. "It starred several film people, including Maggie Lockwood and Richard Todd," said Denison, "and I think we were all somewhat floored down on, though the public flock to it... It took Dulcie and myself some time to accept as theatre people by the theatre world and live down the sort of gooney publicity the film companies

To Tredegar (1963), and the following year Denison had a year's run in *Hostile Witness*, written by Boyd's creator Jack Rafferty, with Denison again a QC, but this time in the dock accused of murdering a judge.

In 1966 Denison and Gray played in a production of *An Ideal Husband* that was less well received critically than the more recent one. "It starred several film people, including Maggie Lockwood and Richard Todd," said Denison, "and I think we were all somewhat floored down on, though the public flock to it... It took Dulcie and myself some time to accept as theatre people by the theatre world and live down the sort of gooney publicity the film companies

put out about us when we were making our films together: a sentimental picture-postcard image of our lives in a thatched cottage in Essex. We are not really sentimental people at all."

The Denisons toured in Coward's *Private Lives* and works by Shaw, Ibsen, Chekhov and Congreve, and their performances in 1970 London production of *The Wild Duck* were described by the critic Harold Hobson as "almost unbearably poignant". Denison professed regret that they did not do more Shakespeare, though in 1972 he played Malvolio in *Twelfth Night* and a majestic Prospero in *The Tempest* at the Regent's Park Open Air Theatre. One of the actor's favourite

roles was that of Pooh Bah in *The Black Mikado* (1975), in which he was the only white performer. "I became an ethnic minority of one at the age of 60! I had a wonderful time dancing and singing with all these youngsters - the oldest of them was 32 years younger than I was. Pooh Bah is a sort of Mr Fix-It, and I played him as Harold Macmillan."

Denison had another television success in the late 1970s when he played the impeccably English Captain Percival in the spy series *The Cold Warrior*. He and his wife had great personal success in a Windsor production of Coward's *A Song at Twilight*, a play they would like to have revived in the West End. Coward was one of their friends and wrote in his diary that he regretted not seeing them more often. "One forgets how nice and intelligent they are."

Denison starred with Peter O'Toole in a revival of *The Apple Cart* (1986) and another Shaw play *You Never Can Tell* (1987) marked his 50th West End appearance. Prior to their recent success in *An Ideal Husband*, the Denisons toured in *Ayckbourn's Bedroom Farce* and in *The Importance of Being Earnest* (in which Denison had played all but one of the male parts). Denison returned to films with a prominent role in Richard Attenborough's *Shadowlands* (1993), and last year received high praise for his performance as Lord Loam in a revival of *The Admirable Crichton* at Chichester.

In 1997 the Denisons charmed New York critics when they made their Broadway debut in *An Ideal Husband*, then returned to resume their roles in the West End production, terminating their run in the play at the Jermyn Street Theatre in *Curtain Up!*, a beginning evening of extracts and anecdotes. Denison was an active member of British Actors' Equity - he was on their council almost continuously from 1949 to 1977 and still served on their Appeal Committee.

He also wrote two volumes of autobiography, *Overture and Beginnings* (1973) and *Double Act* (1985), fine testaments to a distinguished career and to a remarkable professional and personal partnership. "This was the life we hoped to have when we fell in love as students at the Webber-Douglas," he wrote. "Above all, I have been blessed in my companion. To put up with me for so long is surely the apotheosis of 'constancy'. I can only say I would ask her again. I hope she would make the same response."

Tom Vallance

John Michael Terence Wellesley Denison, actor; born Doncaster, Yorkshire 1 November 1915; CBE 1983; married 1939 Dulcie Gray; died Amersham, Buckinghamshire 22 July 1998.

Alan Shepard



Shepard, left, with President Kennedy on the White House lawn, May 1961

Alberto Cavallari

ALBERTO CAVALLARI steered the Milan-based daily newspaper *Corriere della Sera* through one of the most turbulent periods of its history, between 1981 and 1984, when its reputation for serious, independent reporting was compromised by its direct involvement in the Banco Ambrosiano scandal.

Cavallari began his career as a journalist immediately after the war with the socialist weekly *Italia Libera*; he then moved on to the Milanese local paper *Corriere Lombardo* in 1947 and was one of the founders of the news weekly *Epoca* in 1950.

He first arrived at the *Corriere della Sera* in 1954, and after putting in time on local news and crime, graduated to what he did best - long, carefully researched enquiries into aspects of Italian politics and society, many of which were turned into books.

His big break came in 1965, when the then editor of the *Corriere* sent Cavallari down to Rome to cover the final stages of the Second Vatican Council with a mandate to "find out what is happening in the Church". The resulting reports were gathered together in a book, *Il Vaticano che cambia* (1965) - but more importantly they led to Cavallari's being granted an interview with Pope Paul VI, which the *Corriere* published on 3 October 1965, the day before the Pope's historic visit to the United Nations. Syndicated all around the world, this was the first published interview with a pope since before the war.

In 1968 Cavallari left the *Corriere* to become editor of the Venice daily *Il Gazzettino*. Two years later he had moved on once more, working first on television as political correspondent for the Italian state broadcasting company RAI, then as head of the Rome office of the weekly news magazine *Europeo*, before moving to Paris as French correspondent for the Turin-based daily *La Stampa*. In 1977 the *Corriere* poached him back from its old rival,

appointing Cavallari to head its own Paris bureau. It was while he was in Paris in June 1981 that Cavallari received a phone call from the Italian president Sandro Pertini, a longtime friend, who informed him that he was to take on the editorship of the *Corriere* immediately - unless he wanted Pertini to think of him as a coward.

The vacancy had been created when the previous editor, Franco Di Bella, was exposed as one of the members of the P2 Masonic Lodge controlled by the shadowy wheeler-dealer Licio Gelli, which acted as a contact club for high-ranking members of the Italian political, military and media establishment. Six months previously Di Bella had commissioned a long interview with Gelli, in which the Venerable Master talked openly of his plans for a "democratic renaissance" in Italy - plans which included control over the media. The interview was carried out by the television talk show host Maurizio Costanzo, who would also later be exposed as a member of P2.

Piqued by Pertini's appeal to his *amour propre*, Cavallari accepted the job. In his first editorial on 20 June he referred to the "stormy" period which "that Italian institution, the *Corriere della Sera*" was going through. He was in for more of the same before his first year as editor was up.

On 18 June 1982, Roberto Calvi

was found hanged under Blackfriars Bridge in London. Calvi, the man known as "God's Banker", because of his role as financial adviser to the Vatican, was president of the Banco Ambrosiano, which had just crashed leaving debts amounting to \$1.2bn. Among the many ploys Calvi had a finger in was the Rizzoli-Corriere della Sera editorial group, in which he owned a 40 per cent stake. In October 1982 the group was put into receivership and then in February 1983 the remaining two directors, Alberto Rizzoli and Bruno Tassan Din, were arrested for fraudulent bankruptcy. At this point the *Corriere* was

shedding thousands of copies each week, and it even ceased publication for six days; but its staff never lost their confidence in Cavallari, and before the end of his mandate he had reversed the downturn.

Cavallari's editorship was also marked by his undisguised hostility to the then Italian prime minister, Bettino Craxi; and it was this which led to his eventual replacement by Piero Ostelling in June 1984. "Mine was not an easy job," he wrote in his farewell editorial - "it's not every editor who ends up with so many of his bosses arrested and the third hanging under a London bridge". But, he continued, "I steered the *Corriere* through the most terrifying of crossings - with high seas and the wind against me, I risked a shipwreck every single day. Getting to the other shore with the ship still intact was more than I could have hoped for."

After 1984 Alberto Cavallari lived mainly in Paris, working as a columnist for *La Repubblica* and adding to his impressive list of current affairs books, which included studies of modern France, Russia, and China.

Lee Marshall

Alberto Cavallari, journalist; born Piacenza, Italy 1 September 1927; married (two sons); died Levanto, Italy 20 July 1998.

stunned to learn of Gagarin's flight, destroying the legend of eternal US technological superiority. Shepard's mission simply had to go off perfectly - and it did. At 9.49, after touching a maximum speed of 5,060 mph, the capsule splashed down 302 miles out in the Atlantic. Shepard was pronounced "disgustingly normal" by the doctors who examined him. "Everything went just right," he told President Kennedy in the now traditional congratulatory phonecall afterwards. On 8 May 1961, 250,000 people lined Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington to hail the hero who had saved a nation's reputation.

Shepard's active space duty was thereafter hampered by a serious ear infection for six years, a spell in

which he headed NASA's space flight office. But Shepard will always be remembered as the epitome of the US astronaut with his crew-cut and flashing smile, his unquestioning patriotism and boundless self-confidence.

"I'm here to serve the country," he told *Life* magazine after being chosen for the Mercury programme back in 1959. "I know it can be done, that it's important for it to be done and I want to do it." He did.

Rupert Cornwell
Alan Bartlett Shepard, astronaut; born East Derry, New Hampshire 18 November 1923; married 1945 Louise Brewer (two daughters); died Monterey, California 21 July 1998.

Photo: AP/Wide World

Professor Christine Fell

ONE REVIEWER described Christine Fell's book *Anglo-Saxon Women* when it was published in 1984 as both "very learned and deeply enjoyable". Such sums up much of the quality of Fell's scholarship, given that she brought great learning and much wit to both her teaching and research – to the benefit and pleasure of her students and colleagues alike.

The academic fun lives on in York, in the soundtrack Fell wrote for the Jorvik Viking Centre and in her best-selling publications *Jorvik Saga* and *Toki in Jorvik!* As the centre's visitors travel in their "time-cars" through the reconstruction of Viking-age York, they hear snatches of Old Norse conversation, song and children's voices – those of her nieces and other Slingsby schoolchildren, herself and anonymous academic friends such as Ray Page and Alan Binns. A second soundtrack was to follow for the Museum of London.

Fell received national honours for both Early English and Icelandic studies, although her university friends and colleagues will remember her not only for her publications, but also for her many other academic contributions in teaching and administration. Above all, however, they – and many others – will remember Chris Fell for her great gift of love and friendship to the young and old alike.

She was born and went to school in Louth in Lincolnshire, from where she went to Royal Holloway College at London University. She was awarded a BA in English with first class honours in 1959 and continued her university career by undertaking an MA in the Department of Scandinavian Studies at University College London. This she completed in 1961 with a thesis in the form of an edition of the Icelandic text, *Dunstanus Saga*, which was published in 1963.

Fell's first teaching position was at Ripon Training College in 1961, but she moved to Aberdeen University as an Assistant Lecturer in 1963 before being appointed to a Lectureship at Leeds in 1965. The greater part of her academic career was, however, spent at Nottingham University, from 1971 to her retirement in 1987, as Lecturer, Reader and then Professor of Early English Studies, becoming the first Director of the university's newly created Humanities Research Centre in 1994. She also served as Pro-Vice-Chancellor for four years, from 1985 to 1989, with the specific remit for "student affairs", developing herself in particular to improving the welfare of Nottingham's overseas students.



Vikings disembark a longboat, Viking Festival, York. Fell wrote the soundtrack for the Jorvik Viking Centre in York and was the author of the best-selling *Jorvik Saga* and *Toki in Jorvik!* Asadour Guzelian

In the Department of English Studies, Fell's primary concern was the development of its medieval section and this she left in flourishing condition, as one of the strongest in the country, with courses in Old and Middle English and Old Norse, as well as Runic Studies, Viking Studies and Place-Names. At one time or another, Fell taught all of these courses, except Place-Names, to the study of which her contribution was, however, no less important. In 1992, she created at Nottingham a five-year Leverhulme Research Project, "A Survey of the Language of English Place-Names", with herself as the Administrative Director, subsequently taking on the post of Honorary Secretary of the English Place-Name Society in 1993.

Fell also acted in turn as Council Member, Joint Editor and President of the Viking Society for Northern Research. She worked for the British Federation of Women Graduates, becoming the Chair of their Academic Awards Committee and Convenor of the Governors of their Charitable Foundation.

Fell's second major publication was an edition of *Edward King and Martyr* (1971), which was followed by her translation of *Egil's Saga* (1975). The latter has established itself as a standard text, enhanced as it is by the poems of her then Nottingham colleague John Lucas.

She published numerous papers and contributions to conference proceedings, mainly semantic studies, including her Sir Israel Gollancz Memorial Lecture for the British Academy (1986), on "Old English Wicing". A series of articles on the terminology associated with Early English drinks and drinking habits

illustrate not only her concern with the meaning of words, but also for the artefacts they represent, something which led to much happy and fruitful archaeological collaboration.

In 1991, the President of Iceland awarded Fell the Order of the Falcon for her contribution to Icelandic Studies and then, in 1997, she was appointed OBE for her contribution to Early English Studies – fitting recognition of her academic achievements.

James Graham-Campbell

Christine Elizabeth Fell, medievalist; born Louth, Lincolnshire 23 February 1933; Lecturer, Nottingham University 1971-76; Reader 1976-81; Professor of Early English Studies 1981-97 (Emeritus); Pro-Vice-Chancellor 1985-93; OBE 1997; died York 2 July 1998.

GAZETTE

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Princess Royal, President, Animal Health Trust, attends the launch of the Animal Health Trust Jersey Committee at Jersey Zoo, Les Augres Manor, Trinity, Jersey, Channel Islands; opens Morier House, Halkeath Place, St Helier, Jersey, and as Patron, takes the salute at the Royal Tournament at Earls Court Exhibition Centre, London SW5. Princess Alexandra opens the extension to the Douglas Arter Centre, Odstock Road, Salisbury, Wiltshire; as Deputy President, British Red Cross Society, opens the new Wiltshire Headquarters in Gains Lane, Devizes, Wiltshire; and opens the new Vocational Training Centre for the Shaw Trust at Palmer Gardens, Islington, Trowbridge, Wiltshire.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD
The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am.

BIRTHDAYS

Sir Nicholas Barrington, former High Commissioner to Pakistan, 64; Professor Ross Cranston MP, 56; Miss Gloria DeHaven, actress, 74; Sir Alastair Down, former chairman, Burmah Oil, 84; Mr David Essex, entertainer, 51; Mr Michael Foot, former MP, 83; Mr Graham Gooch, cricketer, 45; Mr Alastair Graham, former Head Master, Mill Hill School, 66; Dr Robert Hawley, former chief executive, British Energy, 62; The Rev Mrs Betsy Haworth, deacon and non-stipendiary minister, 74; Sir Harry Hookway, former Pro-Chancellor, Loughborough University, 77; Sir Charles Kerruish, President of Tynwald, Isle of Man, 81; Air Vice-Marshal George Lam, former rugby referee, 85; Mr David Lawman, former chairman, Prestige Group, 77; Mr Clive Rice, cricketer, 49; Lord Rogers of Riverside, architect, 65; Mr Richard Scarry QC, former chairman, the News Corporation, 67; Sir John Stokes, former MP, 81; Mr Peter Twiss, former test pilot, 77.

ANNIVERSARIES

Births: Francesco Sforza, soldier, 1401; Antonio Maria Gasparo Sacchini, opera composer, 1734; François Eugène Vidocq, police detective, 1775; Franz Berwald, composer, 1786; George Catlin, artist and writer, 1796; Coventry Hersey Dighton Patmore, poet, 1823; Richard Hol, composer and organist, 1825; Sir Jonathan Hutchinson, surgeon and scientist, 1828; Edouard (Judas) Colonne, composer and violinist, 1838; Edmund John Armstrong, poet, 1841; Alan Francis Brooke, first Viscount Alanbrooke, Field Marshal, 1883; Salvador de Madariaga y Rojo, writer and diplomat, 1886; Sir Arthur Whitten Brown, aviator, 1888; Raymond Thornton Chandler, novelist, 1888; Ras

Tafari Makonnen, Haile Selassie, Emperor of Ethiopia, 1892; Elspeth Josceline Huxley (Grant), writer, 1907; Michael Wilding, actor, 1912.

Deaths: Sir Henry Percy (Harry Hotspur), killed in battle 1403; Richard Gibson, miniature-painter, 1690; Domenico Scarlatti, composer and harpsichordist, 1757; Arthur Wolfe, first Viscount Kilwarden, Lord Chief Justice of Ireland, murdered 1803; Elizabeth Hamilton, writer, 1816; Isaac Merritt Singer, sewing machine inventor, 1875; Ulysses S. Grant, general and 18th US President, 1885; Sir John Simon, public health pioneer, 1904; Jean-Jacques Henner, painter, 1905; James Maxton, politician, 1946; David Wark Griffith, film director, 1948; Robert Joseph Flaherty, documentary film-maker, 1951; Henri-Philippe Pétain, soldier and Vichy leader, 1951; 1955; Edward Montgomery Clift, actor, 1966; Sir Henry Hallett Dale, physiologist, 1968; Dell Floyd, novelist and playwright, 1969; Eddie Rickenbacker (Edward Vernon Rickenbacker), First World War fighter pilot, 1973; Rosemary Sutcliff, historical novelist, 1992.

On this day: the Battle of Shrewsbury was fought by the Percys against King Henry IV, 1403; Charles Stuart, the Young Pretender, landed at Eriskay Island in the Hebrides, 1745; the Battle of Mogilev, Russia, was fought between Napoleon's troops and those of Tsar Alexander I, 1812; the Battle of Custozza (Italian Wars of Independence) started 1848; the Jewish Disabilities Removal Act was passed by Parliament, 1858; Salvador de Madariaga y Rojo, writer and diplomat, 1886; Sir Arthur Whitten Brown, aviator, 1888; Empress Eugénie was appointed as Regent of France by Emperor Napoleon III, 1870; John

Boyd Dunlop applied to patent a pneumatic tyre, 1883; in London, the "blitz" began with an all-night German air raid, 1940; King Farouk of Egypt was deposed by General Neguib, 1952; the Greek military junta resigned, 1974; the Duke of York married Sarah Ferguson, 1986.

Today is the Feast Day of St Anne or Susanna, St Apollinaris of Ravenna, St Bridget of Sweden, St John Cassian, St Liborius, St Romuald and her Companions, The Three Wise Men.

LECTURES

National Gallery: Colin Wiggins, "Journeys (iv): Gauguin's travels", 1pm. Victoria and Albert Museum: Deirdre Robson, "Reactions to Victorian Taste", 2pm. Tate Gallery: Giorgia Botinelli, "Constantin Brancusi: a modern primitive?", 1pm. British Museum: Hilary Williams, "Techniques of 17th-century British Printmaking", 11.30am. National Portrait Gallery: Emmanuel Cooper, "BP Portrait Award 1998: the critic's view", 1.10pm.

WORLD CONGRESS OF FAITHS
The Sir Francis Youngusband Memorial Lecture was given yesterday by the Right Rev William Spring, Episcopal Bishop of California, at the Royal Scottish Corporation, King Street, London WC2. He spoke on the "United Religions Initiative". Mr Hugh Adamson, Chairman of the World Congress of Faiths, presided.

APPOINTMENTS

Ms Jane Elizabeth Wright and Mr John Mitchell

Rhodes, to be district judges, on the South Eastern Circuit.

Mr John Michael Thomas Rogers QC, to be a circuit judge, on the Wales and Chester Circuit.

Mr Michael Richard King, elected an Ordinary Bencher of Lincoln's Inn.

Lord Lloyd of Berwick, elected Treasurer of the Inner Temple for 1999. Mr Stanley Brodie QC, elected Reader of the Inner Temple for 1999.

CHURCH APPOINTMENTS

The following appointments have been announced by the Church of England:

The Rev Paul Brown, Vicar, Peterborough St Mary Boongate (Peterborough); St Isum Rector, Wembury with Trysull and Bobbington, and Priest-in-Charge, Swindon; St Hilda (Lichfield); The Rev Michael Burden, Curate, Asthall, and Curate, Team Vicar, Cheltenham (Gloucester); The Rev Wendy Dudley, Team Vicar, Hodge Hill St Philip and St James (Birmingham); Team Vicar, Birmingham; with special responsibility for the elderly; with special responsibility for St Stephen (Lichfield).

The Rev Michael Hart, Team Rector, Catherham (Surrey); to be also Rural Dean of Caterham.

The Rev David McCloskey, Vicar, Hallswell St Margaret (Manchester); to be Chaplain, University College of Ripon and York St John (Ripon Campus), and Minister, St John's Chapel Central (Cheshire).

The Rev Nicholas MacNeill, Team Vicar, Ester St Thomas the Apostle, Emmanuel, St Andrew and St Philip (Exeter); to be Vicar, Copeland with Wigton, and North Nithdale with Morecambe (St Albans).

The Rev Mike Sanders, Team Vicar, Eccles St Andrew and St Mary the Virgin (Manchester); to be also Adviser in Education, Manchester Diocese.

The Rev Andrew Scott, Curate, Hildenborough St John the Evangelist (Rochester); to be Team Vicar, Tunbridge Wells, St James (Tunbridge Wells); to be Priest-in-Charge, Chilton Cantelo with Ashington, Marden, Ruxton, and Marston Magna (Bath and Wells).

The Rev Canon Ward, Vicar, Higham (Essex); to be Vicar, West Cottenham, Chesterton, and Middle Chinnock (Bath and Wells).

WHERE THERE was an question in a criminal trial of leaving the jury to draw inferences from the accused's silence when questioned by police, pursuant to section 34 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, the judge should direct the jury in terms not to draw such inferences.

The Court of Appeal allowed the appeal of Patrick John McGarry against his conviction of unlawfully inflicting grievous bodily harm.

The encounter which had led to the charge against the appellant had occurred after the appellant, some of his friends, and a number of other people had been drinking in a club. As the appellant left he had delivered a single punch to the face of the victim. It was the Crown's case that the appellant had made an unprovoked attack on the victim, but the appellant's case was that he had struck him in self-defence.

He was arrested and interviewed after caution, but, on legal advice, refused to answer any questions. Five weeks later, he was re-arrested, cautioned, and interviewed again. At the beginning of the interview he handed in the police a short prepared written statement in which he said that following an earlier altercation with the victim, the victim had subsequently lunged at him and that he had punched the victim in self-defence. Thereafter, when questioned, he had simply answered: "No comment".

The appellant gave evidence at his trial, and although cross-examined, was not asked questions about his "no comment" interviews. The stance adopted

Lord Justice Hutchison said that, if the prosecution had accepted that the accused had not in interview failed to men-

THURSDAY LAW REPORT

23 JULY 1998

R v McGarry
Court of Appeal (Lord Justice Hutchison, Mr Justice Scott Baker and the Judge Advocate General)
16 July 1998

tion any fact subsequently relied on in his defence, no question of inviting the jury to draw inferences from his failure to answer some of the questions put to him in that interview could arise. Prosecuting counsel had adopted such a position in the present case, and it seemed that the judge had not considered that he was wrong to do so.

The question was, evidence having been introduced of both no comment interviews, what if any direction the judge should give to the jury as to how they should regard the appellant's refusal to answer questions of detail put to him by the police.

The court had concluded that in such a case the judge should specifically direct the jury that they should not draw any adverse inference from the defendant's silence. If that were not done, the jury would be left without any guidance as to how they should regard the defendant's refusal to answer, and that might be seriously prejudicial to him.

The common law rule which required that juries should receive a direction against holding silence after caution against an accused, to which s 34 of the 1994 Act provided a limited modification, plainly recognised that a jury, without such guidance, might treat silence as probative of guilt. They should not, therefore, in a case such as the instant case, be left in a no man's land between the common law principle and the statutory exception in s 34, without any guidance to tell them how to regard the defendant's silence.

Kate O'Hanlon, Barrister

WORDS

WILLIAM HARTSTON
scot-free, adj.

IT HAS nothing to do with any alleged reluctance of folk north of the border to pay their fair share of bills. The *scot* in *scot-free* is a ancient word meaning payment, especially for food or entertainment. Dating back at least to the 13th century, it was used in the 16th and 17th centuries as a term for a local tax.

To go *scot-free* therefore signified a dispensation not to pay taxes or monies owed. Properly speaking, it should only be used in connection with financial considerations, though there is a long tradition of misusing the expression to signify freedom from injury or other undesirable consequences of one's actions.

REAL BRITANNIA

What does it mean to be British? PART FOUR

It starts with name-calling. Where does it end?

**BIGOTED BRITANNIA***Racism by Brian Cathcart*

The son is 19, tall and heavily built, not to be trifled with. He lives in south-east London, about a mile from where Stephen Lawrence was murdered, and he speaks with the accent of the district. He shares a small, dingy council house with his 17-year-old brother, two sisters aged 16 and 12, and his mother. None of them goes out in the evenings.

They are what we call "Asian", although all the children were born in Britain and it is 34 years since the mother left India. ("I never even think of India now," she says.) To a gang of local white kids, however, they are "Pakis", whose lives they make a misery.

It started with name-calling, which is a part of life for a great many Asians. The family had moved to this estate because of harassment in their previous home, and it was in fact an improvement just to be called names.

Then one day the daughters arrived back from school to find four or five white teenagers hanging around in the street, and some stones were thrown at them. The son barged out of the house and confronted the attackers. "I told them if it ever happened again they would get a slapping." He had answered back, and from there it escalated. There have been no more stones, no violence, just threats. A girl taunted him: "Just hit me once and that'll give me the excuse to get people down to do you." Another shouted: "We're gonna get someone to fire-bomb you."

The crowd who hang around near the house has grown in number from five to 15. They follow the son if he goes out, always shouting. Now he is terrified that his sisters or his mother will be attacked if he is not there. His mother is equally terrified that her sons will take on the white kids and be stabbed like Stephen Lawrence, or else be arrested and jailed for assault. They will not move house to escape - they have already tried that.

So they all stay every night, shut behind their door with its fire-proof letter box, while the local council's 24-hour alarm button glows red in the corner of the living-room. And they are in dread of the summer holidays: "We'll have six or seven weeks of them off school just hanging around here non-stop."

There you have it: an ordinary little story of racism. What does it tell us about Britishness in the Nineties?

To those involved, it is all about Britishness. What the white kids shout is: "Why don't you go back where you came from?" To which the son would like to say: "I'm born and bred here, and I'm older than them. I've been living here four or five years longer than they have, haven't I? So I reckon that makes me more British than them."

But stories like this, stories of ugly racial harassment, reveal something more important through the reactions they provoke in the wider British public. Here, in no particular order, are five common responses:

1. The police and the justice system should be doing more to deter this by identifying, prosecuting and punishing active racists.

2. The perpetrators of racial harassment and racial violence are a tiny minority in the country, and despite their claims to a super-

ior Britishness, their attitudes have nothing to do with being British.

3. Young racists act in this way because they have been failed by their parents, the education system, the welfare system and the economy. They are frustrated "white trash".

4. Britain's race problems are nowhere near as bad as those elsewhere in Europe; the German neo-Nazis and Le Pen's National Front command millions of votes, while the British National Party has barely more support than the Monster Raving Loonies.

5. Racism in Britain is on its way out. Fifty years after the Empire Windrush, this country is adapting to multiculturalism. Look at the successful black people on television, in top-level sport and (belatedly) in politics and public affairs - the effect must be trickling through society.

Each one of these arguments may be in itself well founded and fair; but together do they not smack uncomfortably of denial? Racism in Britain, they imply, is obscure, marginal, sick and of no real long-term importance. Insofar as it matters at all, it is something for the police to get off their beads and sort out.

The attitude is not easy to square with the facts. Race crime is consistently under-reported, but a study of the figures for 1991 in the British Crime Survey provided estimates of the true picture. In that year there were probably 53,000 instances of racial threats, 26,000 racially motivated acts of vandalism and 32,000 racially motivated assaults. The indicators suggest that things have been getting steadily worse since then.

These are high numbers by any standards - there are nearly 100 assaults per day. Thousands of families, perhaps more than 10,000, are living in fear like that Asian family in south-east London. There are probably more than 100,000 people committing overt racist acts. Racism, in short, is common in Britain and it is on the increase.

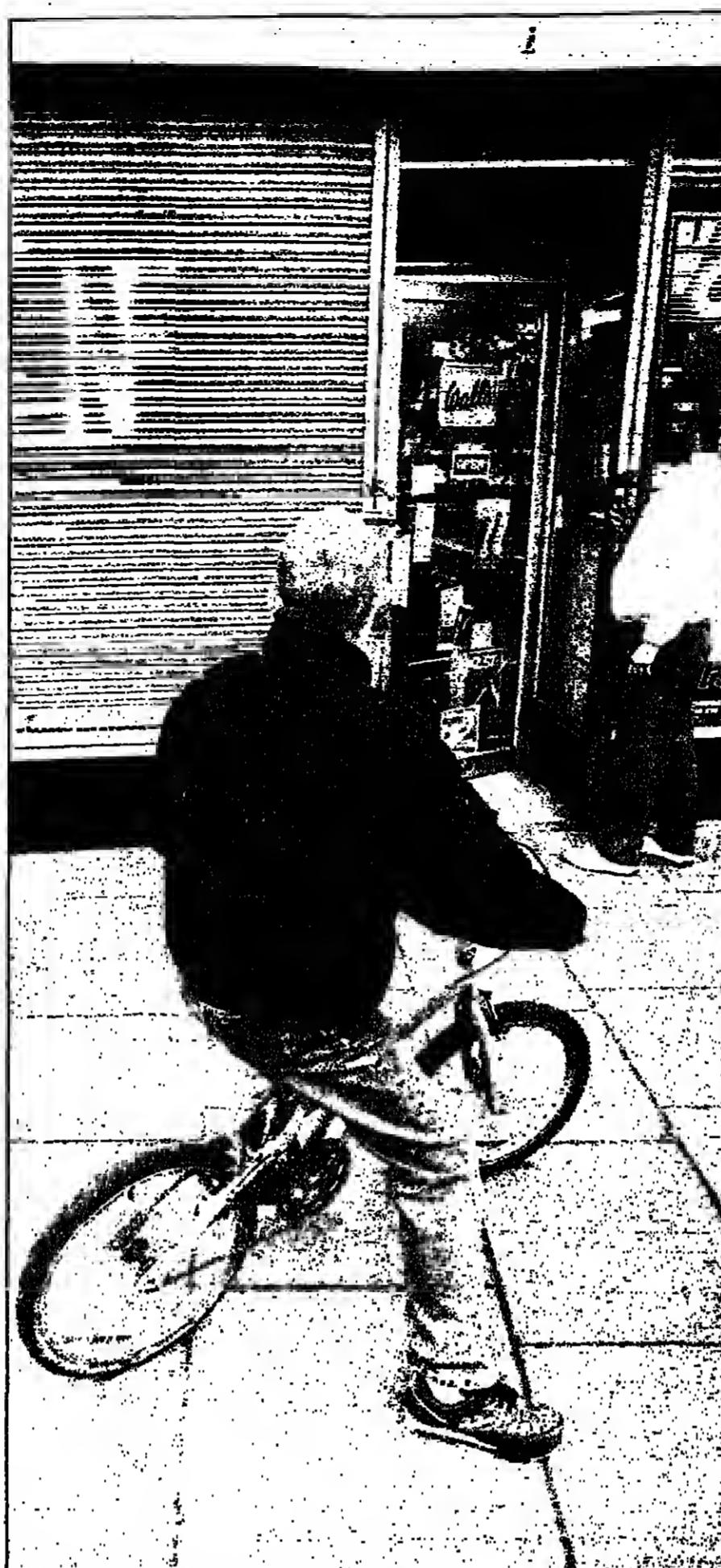
What if it is endemic? What if racism, instead of being the outmoded behaviour of a dysfunctional minority, were a part of being British in the Nineties? What if it were deeply ingrained in the modern white British mind? It may be an unattractive thought, but it makes it easier to explain why there is so much racial violence, and, for that matter, why black and Asian people remain so comprehensively disadvantaged in Britain.

Of course, nobody wants to wear such a label. At the inquiry into Stephen Lawrence's murder, the question: "Are you a racist?" was guaranteed to provoke a passionate denial. Most witnesses were offended, hurt and shocked at the suggestion.

One would fall down and you would think: "Oh my God, there's something wrong." You would go over, and the other might get you. That did pass through my mind." The Taaffe quickly set aside their fear and crossed the road to give Stephen all the help they could in his dying moments. They did not act as racists, but Mr Taaffe admitted that for a moment he thought as a racist, stereotyping Stephen and Duwayne as muggers because they were young and black.

Giving evidence to the inquiry, Mr Taaffe acknowledged that in that instant he hesitated. "The thought flashed across my mind that perhaps it was a ploy.

It does not have to be this way. In the past 15 years, crimes such as child abuse, rape and drink-driving have come to be treated with far greater seriousness in Britain, and that is the result of deliberate acts of self-scrutiny and a preparedness to confront problems previously neglected. If that has not happened with racial violence (and it has not), then perhaps it is because the victims of these crimes are overwhelmingly black and Asian. What could be more racist?



Racism still flourishes in Eltham, south-east London Peter Macdiarmid

people routinely make assumptions on grounds of race, and that those assumptions tend to reflect a sense of superiority or of fear. What counts, then, is how far you allow those assumptions to influence you, or how far you give expression to them.

Take the case of Conor Taaffe (an Irishman, as it happens, but his story applies just as well). He and his wife saw Stephen Lawrence and his friend Duwayne Brooks running, moments after Stephen was stabbed that night in 1993, and they saw Stephen fall to the ground and Duwayne call for help.

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'A prostitute is not a rapist'

Condemnation of childminder Helen Stacey focused on her past convictions for soliciting. But many women working on the streets do so to support their children. And many men who pay for sex are fathers. By Jack O'Sullivan



Helen Stacey, condemned for the wrong reasons?

KIM HAS avidly followed the news over the past few days. She is preoccupied with Helen Stacey's murder conviction for shaking six-month-old Joseph Mackin so hard that he died. Like any other mother, she has found her concerns about childminders reawakened. It reminds her of when she withdrew her own daughter from a carer, because she was not providing good meals. "It is so difficult to know you are leaving a child in a safe place," she says. "Especially a baby, because a baby can't tell you what has been happening while you have been away."

But the case worries her for another reason. Kim is a prostitute, as was Helen Stacey at one time. And the reporting of the Stacey case – with headlines such as "Vice girl secret of child killer" – has exposed a media assumption that prostitutes are unfit to be mothers. The implication of a lot of coverage is: "how could an prostitute be allowed to register as a childminder?"

It is a view that may make sense to some. Not to Kim, a single mother who has been soliciting for eight years, since her early twenties. "One of the reasons I became a 'working girl' was to support my daughter," she says. "I felt it would be flexible work and would fit in with being a mother. It's better than a nine-to-five job, which often doesn't allow for child-care illness and school holidays."

Kim is also aware of hypocrisy in the media coverage. Many of her clients are fathers. "They go back to their families after being with me, as though nothing had happened. Some say it doesn't affect their relationships. They don't see themselves as being unfaithful if they are paying for sex. I have never seen guilt."

And she does not think these

men are exceptional. She is convinced that most men pay for sex at some time in their lives. "If I had only one type of guy coming along then I would say it's just a certain sort of man. But I see men of every race, age and class – good-looking guys, disabled guys. They are all ready to pay for sex."

Nevertheless, it is women who run the risks as parents. "It's a big fear among working women that they will lose their children." As the English Collective of Prostitutes says: "It is much easier to be declared an unfit parent if you are a woman working as a pros-

titute than if you are a violent father."

"This is clearly a big worry to many prostitutes, 70 per cent of whom may be mothers. Most of these women choose to have a baby with their partner rather than becoming pregnant accidentally by a client." In all the years I have worked," says Kim. "I have only ever come across one case of a prostitute having a child with a client." She herself conceived her daughter during a long-standing relationship, before she began soliciting.

Kim recalls the risks mothers run of losing their children. She describes what happened to a fellow prostitute. "She went to the social services because she wasn't coping with life. She had emotional problems aside from prostitution. They should have supported her. But then she hurtled out how she was making her money, and they were disgusting to her. They took her two children away."

All of which helps explain why

I probably would not recognise Kim if I passed her in the street with her daughter, even though we have spent more than an hour discussing intimate aspects of her life. Dressed in a smart cotton trouser suit, with large dark glasses and a blond wig, she is obsessed with keeping her identity and her work secret. She commutes from the West Country to London and other parts of the country, keeping as discreet distance from her clients as possible.

"I get frightened as soon as a link is made between prostitution

It is much easier to be declared an unfit parent if you are a woman working as a prostitute than if you are a violent father'

and a crime," she says. "It was wrong for the papers to pick up that Helen Stacey was a prostitute and suggest that was why she was unfit to care for children. She has been found guilty of a terrible crime, but it doesn't add up to prostitution made her that way."

"It would be terrible if this case were used to prevent women who have been prostitutes earlier in their lives from working with children. A lot of prostitutes go into caring jobs. I know women who have gone on to work with the elderly or have gone into nursing."

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going into other caring industries are already diminishing. "If you are cautioned or prosecuted for prostitution, you're recorded as a sex offender. You're on the same list as paedophiles, people who abuse children or rape. But a prostitute isn't a rapist. We are not abusers." It is a categorisation that prostitutes are currently lobbying the Home Office to change.

Kim herself has worked with mentally ill people, though not with children other than her own daughter. At one time, she says, she wanted to become a childminder, but decided against it for fear that her working life might be revealed to her daughter and family, who know nothing of what she does for a living.

"My daughter would have an awful lot to contend with. It would be difficult for her if it were known at school what I do. It's not that I am ashamed of what I do; it's just that it's easier if she does not have to cope with the stigma."

She has been cautioned in the past. "I don't know whether it is still on my records. When I go for a straight job, I won't tell them about it. But obviously, if they found out, it would go against me."

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POETIC LICENCE

LIFE IN THE BUS LANE
BY MARTIN NEWELL

The Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott's White Paper on transport aims to cool the public's ardour for the motor car

She does the school run in the rain
And parks up in your cycle lane
Then bips you if you dare complain
Will Prescott make her whole again?

By setting up as eco-nurse
And tell her things are getting worse?
Threaten, tax, cajole, coerce
To net her conscience and her purse?

No. To cycle's good and fine
If the sun should deign to shine
But to drive the car's divine
And the four-wheel is her shrine

Now what about young Matey-boy
Whose Escort is his darling toy?
You'd part him from his pride and joy
To bus it with the ho! pollo!

New wisdom from the Transport Tsar
Delivered from his Jaguar
While TV ads purr: "Buy a car
And pull this bird in Wonderbra".

And though more conscientious voters
Might succumb to driving rotas
Right from Lada up to Lotus
Drivers hate to share their motors

And headlamps will caress the drives
Of gridlocked Britain and its wives
Until the Reaper's cab arrives
To free them from their wretched lives



'Drivers hate to share their motors'

Should I tell my daughter to leave her husband?

WHEN CHILDREN are tiny, parents have to protect them from their own mistakes. You don't stand back and let your three-year-old shove his fingers into the electric light socket and hope that the shock he gets will "teach" him that it's not a wise move. You don't let him toddle across the motorway until he "learns" that doing so only leads to painful accidents. Or worse.

But as children grow up you slowly allow them to make their own boos. As they turn into teenagers, you may suggest, if your daughter has an argument with a friend, that an apology usually works, if she wants to resume the friendship. You may say that it is probably wise not to sleep around because it does not lead to happiness.

But during adolescence, you gradually have to start the most difficult parenting of all – the hands-off parenting, where you are simply there all the time to offer general pieces of advice, and be there to pick up the pieces if they make the wrong move.

Angels is still on the "Don't put your fingers in the socket" type of parenting, and she is way off beam. Of course, it is incredibly hard not

to hate people who make your children miserable. No doubt Angela would like to hang her son-in-law from piano wire while applying a cigarette to the soles of his feet. But how would she feel if, let's say, her husband made her miserable by shouting at her during a stressful period in his life, and her daughter suddenly disowned him?

People can make mistakes. Shouting is not the end of the world unless it goes on for ever. Infidelity is painful, but some women can cope, for all kinds of reasons. Perhaps they are terrified of being on their own; perhaps they want a father for their child; perhaps they like married life and all the dinner-party trimmings that go with it; perhaps, deep down, they are still in love.

Another's job, when a daughter is grown up, is to be a ballroom dancing partner to her, as far as she can. When her daughter gets married she should welcome her son-in-law into the family fold, even if he is twice her age, has been married eight times before, and drinks like a fish.

When her daughter has been made miserable by him, Angela should be there with cocoa and roar-

ing fires to comfort her. She could even join in conversations about what a shit her son-in-law is. And when her daughter decides to go back, she should welcome her son-in-law as if he's an erring sheep who's returned to the fold.

She should bind him to her with charm and friendliness so that if he's tempted to stay again, he thinks twice about giving up such a gorgeous, loving family background. In other words, how Angela reacts actually adds to the stability of the marriage and behaving like a sulky child will only put stress on the relationship between her daughter and son-in-law.

Perhaps Angela feels rather silly about having to change her attitude so often. It is always awkward for friends, who often say such awful things as "Never could see what you saw in him", when a girlfriend splits from her partner, to have to pretend they never said it when the pair get back together again.

But finally, if Angela gets so angry about people making her daughter unhappy, how dare she make her daughter unhappy herself by behaving in such a controlling, pig-headed way?

Tell her to get rid of him; she cannot bear to think of her being made unhappy again. She refuses to have her son-in-law in the house after what he has done. But her husband disagrees

DILEMMAS



VIRGINIA IRONSIDE

Devastated by her husband's infidelity, Angela's daughter came to stay with her parents for a month, bringing her child. Now she has gone home, and is giving her husband a second chance.

Angela has begged her daughter to get rid of him;

and you are not one of them. Whether or not your daughter and her husband rebuild their marriage depends on them alone; so does the effect of the outcome on their child.

JOHN PELLING
Kedington, Suffolk

MY HUSBAND had an affair after we

had been very happily married for seven years.

In his eighties he died suddenly but I do not mourn him much; I am just grateful that he suffered no long terminal illness. Rarely does an hour pass without a flicker of pleasure at something that reminds me of him. I never think about that silly affair.

We had nearly 50 years together,

but by the end were virtually one person. The shadow of death passed over our thoughts and words sometimes, for neither could endure the thought of losing the other, but even that passed.

Thank God there was no interfering parent-in-law who sought to persuade him to leave me.

IRENE
London

THERE CAN be only one solution to

Angela's problem: leave well alone. This situation involves three people,

NEXT WEEK'S DILEMMA

Dear Virginia,
My wife has given me an ultimatum about my drinking. Either I give up, or she leaves. I know I have to do something about it, as it is slowly getting out of hand. I drink about a bottle of brandy a day, and a bottle of wine, and I can't get up without a drink. I know I have a problem. Where can I get help? All the clinics seem to be based on the lines of Alcoholics Anonymous: I just couldn't deal with that. Is there a pill I can take? Would hypnosis work? Eric

Letters are welcome, and everyone who has a suggestion quoted will be sent a bouquet from Interflora. Send your comments and suggestions to Virginia Ironside, Features Department, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 2SD, fax 0171-293 2182, or e-mail: dilemmas@independent.co.uk, by Tuesday morning

When the Merc just has to go

Why Gary Barlow has joined the Golf club. By Matt Seaton



IT IS called being a victim of your own success. Earlier this month it emerged that the singer-songwriter Gary Barlow had traded in his £75,000 black S-class Mercedes for a second-hand VW Golf.

There must be some classic music industry cautionary tale of riches to rags here: the advance going up the nose, the album bombing and the dodgy manager scarpering when the Inland Revenue calls. But in Barlow's case nothing could be further from the truth: after the Take That split in 1993, his first solo album, Open Road, sold 2 million copies world-wide, to lever him into the Top 10 of Britain's wealthiest recording artists, with a fortune estimated at £2m.

So why did he get shot of the Merc? Simply because it was more trouble than it was worth, according to his agent, Graham Hill: in the seven months Barlow had the car, commuting between his estate in Cheshire, his flat in London and engagements in London and Manchester, he was stopped by the police 51 times – that's almost twice a week.

Yet Barlow was never once charged with a motoring offence. Often the coppers would ask him for an autograph when they realised that the 24-year-

old they had pulled over was not a car thief or a drug dealer but the squire of Delamere Manor. A spokesperson for the police force in Barlow's home county of Cheshire says: "It may be his standard of driving was appalling, or he wasn't wearing his seatbelt or something, but without specific instance – where and when he was stopped – we can't comment."

It wasn't just the unwanted attention of the traffic cops that got Barlow down. Hardly a week went by when the car was not keyed. And the three-pointed Daimler-Benz star on the bonnet soon disappeared. The problem is that black Mercedes are used by all the limo

album going in at number one by splashing out on a bright red convertible Merc. Blue Peter's Katy Hill loves her Porsche Boxster, as does Meg Matthews (a gift from Noel when she passed her test). And it is not just the young women who like flash wheels: Elaine Paige has just exchanged her Mercedes for a Jaguar XKR. Even Germaine Greer drives a Merc.

There may, of course, be some truth in the implicit perception that joyriders and car thieves are nearly always male, but the idea that all women are slow, careful, religiously law-abiding motorists needs updating. You suspect that some anti-social attitudes underpin the notion that women do not commit auto crime – in particular, an assumption that a woman at the wheel of a flash motor is there because she is driving her husband's car.

No wonder Weldon is sorry for men these days. While women are blasting past in their soft-top sports cars, the sad old geezers are reduced to chugging along in the slow lane in their beaten-up hatchbacks. Unwittingly, Barlow has joined Generation Golf, the grungy end of the automotive food chain. At least he is in reasonable company: Damon Albarn and Suggs drive Golfs, too.

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On the edges of madness

Mervyn Peake lived life at its extremes, whether as a patient in a mental hospital or as a war artist in Belsen. But *Gormenghast*, his classic trilogy, has always had mass appeal. By Liz Jensen

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THE SUFFERING artist who sacrifices his own mental stability in the quest for an aesthetic ideal is a familiar, almost romantic figure in our culture. But there is nothing beguiling about the financial hardship, or the depression, that are its most distinctive hallmarks. For Mervyn Peake, creator of the famous *Gormenghast* trilogy, those twin realities became a horror story.

"I have played too much around the edges of madness..." he wrote to his beloved wife, Maeve. "I will never write about mad people again." The letter itself was written from one of the mental institutions where he spent much of the last decade of his life, in painful mental disarray, having created a body of work that was to bring him to real fame only after his death.

As a writer, Mervyn Peake stood in a category all of his own. It was a lonely place to be. Quentin Crisp, a friend and admirer, says of Peake's darkly playful imagination: "I don't think he knew it was grim. I think he thought it was enchanted. But everything turned out sinister, strange."

That is to put it mildly. Peake - an artist and illustrator as well as a poet, novelist and playwright - was a creative genius whose imagination flourished at the outer limits of consciousness.

He was raised in China and, growing up in a missionary hospital, he was exposed early to the macabre physical abnormalities wrought by tropical disease. Like Flaubert before him, he would watch his doctor father performing surgical operations - including amputations. Like Flaubert, he was to be fascinated and horrified by the spectacle.

The Chinese culture that surrounded him was also to feed his already fertile imagination: throughout his work there are evoca-

cations of the sumptuous and complex rituals enacted in traditional Chinese ceremonies.

It is possible that another seed was planted in childhood, too - that of a neurological disorder, *encephalitis lethargica*, which his family believes was part of his long final illness. In fact, Peake was never given a clear diagnosis what was wrong with him.

The problems began while he was still a young man. During the Second World War, Peake, who had been working as an artist and illustrator, found the discipline of life in the army petty and baffling. In his barracks, he began *Titus Groan*, the first novel of his trilogy, which he sent to his wife in notebooks, accompanied by drawings and doodles. It was soon after writing about the mental breakdown of Sepulchre, the Earl of Gormenghast, that Peake succumbed to his own version. Many writers and artists suffer periodically from some form of mental illness - usually depression. There has always been a debate about whether it is their instability that fosters their creativity - or their creativity that drives them hazy. But instability and creativity aside, when you add Belsen to the mix, you surely have a recipe for disaster.

Peake became convinced that he should be more commercial, and set about writing for the theatre. It took five years for his play, *The Wit To Woo*, to reach the stage - and when it did, it received only mediocre reviews. Peake was devastated.

"He was shaking uncontrollably and in a terrible state," says his daughter, recalling the sight of him the next morning. The failure of the play triggered another bout of depression, and a period of insanity followed.

"All will come right and we will storm the citadels together," he wrote to Maeve from the mental hospital. "This is going to be a great spring in our lives."

But it was not to be. By the age of 46, Peake had lost his mind for good. It seems miraculous that he managed to write *Titus Alone*, the last book of the trilogy, at all. As it was, he was too ill to make any of the changes his publisher would have liked. It was his last work and, inevitably, it is deeply flawed.

It would be wrong to suggest that Peake's life was a story of untrammelled misery. There was great happiness as well as great disappointment and confusion. He re-

ceived some critical recognition in his own lifetime, both as a visual artist and a writer. He had a family he adored.

The last 11 years of his life, however, saw a terrible and rapid decline. In 1968, cosed by repeated electro-convulsive therapy and a disastrous brain operation, he



By the age of 46, Peake had lost his mind for good



Bookmark: Mervyn Peake. Saturday 25 July 1998, 8.10-9.00 pm, BBC2.



How do they do that? The human stars of 'Dr Dolittle'

Animatronic animals? Mere child's play

Dr Dolittle may be the talk of the town, but what do the target audience think?

Suzanne Moore and her children find out

Harrison was in the original film. Many of the sentiments are rather pat: all animals are good; they work for us to give us milk and meat; all fox-hunting is bad. My vegetarian kids already believe this with a religious zeal so none of it seemed in any way controversial. Yet you cannot help wondering what kind of vision of animal life is being sold here. False animals are preferable to real ones. Some of the animals are cartoonlike, such as the "pushim-pullyu", described by my kids as "a bit lame", while others are intended to be as lifelike as possible. For all

its preachiness, this is as much a fantasy about animals as any Disney movie. For this, remember, is a world where seals have husbands, and they are called things like Nigel.

The highlights of the show are, of course, the unrealistic animals of all, like the giant pink snail that miraculously changes its expressions. My kids gave the show nine out of 10 and, while I found it flat in places, I can confidently say that you would have to take a lot of drugs to replicate the feeling of having Phillip Schofield hovering above your head on a psychedelic giant lunar moth.

beneath him, but that is where he belongs - and the screenplay's satanic inclinations are only fitfully diverting - a skyscraper update of Christ's mountain-top temptation works but is Milton's passing acquaintance with Don King the height of evil?

The Borrowers (U)
Available to rent now
Peter Hewitt's free adaptation of Mary Norton's novels is a delight. When Oafous P Potter, this week's second nasty lawyer, threatens to evict a family from their home, he is also unknowingly about to put the Clock family out on the street. As Borrowers, the miniature Clocks depend upon their larger hosts' leftovers for their existence. There is little out of the ordinary in the plot; the Clocks and the son of their outsize benefactors collaborate to stymie Potter.

Hewitt is careful not to sacrifice the talents of John Goodman as Potter, and Jim Broadbent and Celia Imrie as the Clock parents; to ostentatious special effects. It is also nice to see, amongst all the fun, Gemma Jackson's remarkable vision of a kind of Anglo-American parallel universe.

Anyway, it has to be said that real animals just are not as cute as some of the creatures on show here.

Philip Schofield, whom I have always rather liked but who, according to my young companion Amelia, is "the most annoying man in the whole wide world and I know that for a fact", plays the doctor. Yet all the actors, though efficient enough, are inevitably overshadowed by the real stars - the animatronic animals. The whole production is a prolonged "How do they do that?" number. How do they make a swooning pig? A dog that can jump? A horse that looks so completely horse-like?

As you might expect from an all-singing, all-dancing animal rights manifesto, the whole thing is rather humourless. Schofield is just too nice to be as edgy or as funny as Rex

Harrison was in the original film.

Many of the sentiments are rather pat: all animals are good; they work for us to give us milk and meat; all fox-hunting is bad. My vegetarian kids already believe this with a religious zeal so none of it seemed in any way controversial. Yet you cannot help wondering what kind of vision of animal life is being sold here. False animals are preferable to real ones. Some of the animals are cartoonlike, such as the "pushim-pullyu", described by my kids as "a bit lame", while others are intended to be as lifelike as possible. For all

its preachiness, this is as much a fantasy about animals as any Disney movie. For this, remember, is a world where seals have husbands, and they are called things like Nigel.

The highlights of the show are, of course, the un-realistic animals of all, like the giant pink snail that miraculously changes its expressions. My kids gave the show nine out of 10 and, while I found it flat in places, I can confidently say that you would have to take a lot of drugs to replicate the feeling of having Phillip Schofield hovering above your head on a psychedelic giant lunar moth.

VIDEO WATCH

MIKE HIGGINS



The prospect of disinheritance looms heavy over 'The Wings of the Dove'

for the past 15 years? At least here he has had the good grace to find a vehicle equal in bombast to his now-customary overblown performances. Pacino plays a libidinous American tycoon called John Milton who hires a young gun provincial lawyer, Keanu Reeves, and lures him to New

York. As it turns out, Milton is not so much "the devil's party" as Old Nick himself. He swiftly bestows favours - a swish apartment, the choicest legal cases - on Reeves, who finds himself increasingly ill at ease with his Faustian fast track.

The director, Taylor Hackford,

can't seem to make up his mind whether he is mounting a satire on American corporate values or a would-be metaphysical thriller, but over the course of 139 minutes such indecision becomes an infernal bore. Reeves, again, is miscast - he may well find multiplex fare such as Speed

Travels in time

IMAGINE A monologue that shuttles between, say, a trip to a concentration camp and a jaunt to Alton Towers and you have some sense of the switchback tone of 2.5 *Minute Ride*, an autobiographical, one-woman show written and presented by the performance artist Lisa Kron. The piece, conveyed as a gossip talk with

THEATRE

2.5 MINUTE RIDE
BARBICAN
LONDON

slides, juggles accounts of two very different journeys. In one, Kron accompanies her father on a visit to Auschwitz, where his parents, who had sent him for safety to the US in 1937, died. The other is the Kron family's annual trip to an amusement park. Here, her father, a blind septuagenarian with a heart condition, delights in riding roller-coasters.

With a winningly open manner and a fast delivery, Kron treats us to some very funny, affectionately exaggerated snapshots of her eccentric relations: her chronically camera-shy ceremony-shunning mother ("when I came out as a lesbian, I am sure one of her first thoughts was, 'Oh, thank God, I won't have to go to her wedding'"); the grandmother who stuffed her house with cosmetics because she felt sorry for the Avon lady; the brother who, residing among wall-to-wall Gentiles in Lansing, Michigan, had to resort to the Internet to find a Jewish bride.

It is her father, though, who is the principal focus and, given the dramatic cultural uprooting of his childhood, that focus is blurred. Kron likens his long American existence to "a translucent overlay that doesn't quite match up". At her brother's nuptials, where she finds herself sobbing volitionally alongside all the sentimental straights, she gazes at her father and sees a little old man who has lost his country, parents and culture. "all gone forever and this was the closest he was ever going to come to it again and it didn't feel like enough and it felt too much for me".

Like *Kindertransport*, Diane Samuels' recent play about the long-term effects on those Jewish children evacuated to safety, 2.5 *Minute Ride* looks at what remains unresolved in the sense of identity of such people, here from the perspective of a daughter troubled by the limits of her power to offer consolation.

It is the honesty of the piece that impresses as much as the resilient, quirky humour. Kron admits that she felt euphoric relief immediately after the distressing Auschwitz visit. But then, in a gruesomely ironic cock up, it turned out that the old man had left his bag of eyeglasses behind and she had to make a nerve-racking return. It is almost too glaring a demonstration that some business is never finished.

Kron, a founder member of the Five Lesbian Brothers company, brings to the subject of holocaust survival a refreshing refusal to presume privileged insight. By presenting her father's deepest feelings as beyond her grasp, she paradoxically does him proud. Never remotely pious, 2.5 *Minute Ride* is an act of filial piety. Booking: 0171-638 8891

PAUL TAYLOR

GALLERY WEEK

QUAY ARTS CENTRE
NEWPORT
ISLE OF WIGHT

THE ADVERTISEMENT read: "Confess all on video. Interested?" call Gillian."

Members of the public duly stepped forward, and the Turner Prize winner Gillian Wearing got to work. The end result is now on show at the Quay Arts gallery in Newport, Isle of Wight. Those interviewed are in disguise, but from behind the bright wigs, false noses and comical masks, harrowing, unsettling facts emerge. Sexual confusion, acts of revenge, secret obsessions are all given an airing. "I'm always trying to find ways of discovering things about people, and about myself," Wearing says.

To make the exhibition as interactive as possible, visitors themselves are asked to confess all. To date, more than 100 confessions have been received and are displayed on the gallery walls. All have been typed up to ensure anonymity - the Isle of Wight is a small place and handwritten messages could easily be recognised.

"It's clear from the comment book that some people don't necessarily like the exhibition," admits Cundall, "but they do find it thought-provoking and stimulating. Whether or not they think it's great art is another question."

'Confess All on Video' is at Quay Arts, Newport, Isle of Wight (01983 82290) until Saturday 25 July.

KATE MIKHAIL

★ ★ ★
GENIUS
"BRILLIANT"

★ ★ ★
"EPIC"
"DISGUISED"

★ ★ ★
"WONDERFUL"
"INVENTIVE"

STARRED
MADE
AWARDED

FILM

Shiftless in Savannah

THE BIG PICTURE



BOYD TONKIN

THE GINGERBREAD MAN
(15)
DIRECTOR: ROBERT ALTMAN
STARRING: KENNETH
BRANAGH, EMBETH DAVIDTZ

THE LAST time that Robert Altman built a film around an errant man of law, the chemical sun of Los Angeles slumped down on Elliott Gould's Philip Marlowe in his updated version of *The Long Goodbye*. A quarter of a century on, Hurricane Geraldo blows in sheet after sheet of sub-tropical rain over sultry Savannah, soaking Kenneth Branagh's puppy scumbag of a lawyer.

In *The Gingerbread Man*, a typically machine-tooled story by John Grisham supplants the hand-crafted prose of Raymond Chandler as Altman's source. Meanwhile, the weather down those mean streets has taken a sharp turn for the worse. This has more to do with the grand old pathetic fallacy than the steam-bath microclimate of the elegantly wasted Georgia city that now makes as much cash from locations as it once did from plantations. (Anyone who saw Clint Eastwood's *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* will feel some powerful pangs of déjà vu.)

A short history of the mood-enhancing downpour in film noir might begin with the brewing hurricane in John Huston's *Key Largo*, move through the twin drenchings of *Cape Fear*, marks one (J Lee Thompson) and two (Martin Scorsese), and close with the biblical torrents of David Fincher's *Seven*. Altman joins these stormy trouvers with a gusto which – mixed with the mahogany interiors designed by Stephen Altman, the director's son – strongly suggests a burg where the ethical barometer has plunged.

It works well enough, but you soon wonder why this innovator is making do with such a hammy ruse. And then you wonder what – beside necessity – drew Altman to this dampish, low-pressure project in the first place.

Branagh, sporting a plausible Georgia drawl and an implausible ginger beard that makes him look like an apprentice Robin Cook plays Rick Magruder, a cocky little jack-rabbit of an adulterous attorney. He celebrates his victory in a case



Robert Downey Jr, who plays a boozy harpy of a private detective, is denied the chance to act Kenneth Branagh off the rain-soaked set of Robert Altman's waterlogged *The Gingerbread Man*

against the cops by spending the night with a waitress who served at the celebration bash. Embeth Davidtz (last seen by most of us catering to wicked Ralph Fiennes in *Schindler's List*) has the frantic, bunched air that links her to Altman's long-term taste for foxy female leads. She also has a pretty decented part in the shape of Robert Duvall, no less, who hangs out with his gang of shaggy Survivalist bath-dodgers in the woods.

Wacko (indeed, Waco) Dad seems to be stalking his own daughter. We even see a strung-up kitty as the proof. Driven by mingled lust and guilt, Branagh bends the rules to help his extramarital squeeze – under the disapproving gaze of his

legal partner Daryl Hannah, acting serious with tously hair and beer-bottle specs. For some eccentric back-up, he even calls in Robert Downey Jr's boozy harpy of a private dick (how's that for typecasting?).

After his kids go missing, Branagh packs heat and heads into the trees for a sodden showdown in the Duvall camp. Now the trademark Grisham twist kicks in – and we remember that no dripping noir would be complete without its slippery femme fatale. Stung and strung along, Branagh ends up pissing at an oo-screen fag. Nowadays, you don't sink lower than that.

At one point, a good ol' boy growls at Branagh: "You got yourself into a whole bucketful of shit here, Ma-

gruder". Well, I wouldn't go quite that far. Yet the routine level of so much in *The Gingerbread Man* does disappoint on every front. Earnest, fussy, self-enclosed, Branagh sucks in energy like a cinematic black hole. Quite why this incandescent stage actor dies on screen in non-Shakespearean roles is a mystery to rank with his willingness to wear that stupid tawny fuzz. It is less of a puzzle why the masterful Duvall and the waywardly gifted Downey have damn all to do around these parts. Altman knows that, given his head, either of them could act Branagh off the set and half-way down the Savannah river.

Yet the buck has to stop in the director's chair. In Hollywood, no good deed ever goes unpunished. And Altman's scandalous virtue was to sketch, through 25 years of golden moments, from *M*A*S*H* to *Short Cuts*, a loose-limbed, free-form ensemble cinema that mocked the studio dogmas of character and cause. The orchestrator of *Nashville* and *The Player* brought chaos theory to the movies while most films still treated people and events as if they were Newtonian snooker-balls. Listen to the proto-jazz jam session in his last work, *Kansas City*, and you will hear in jazz the kind of vagabond polyphony that Altman sought on screen.

The moguls punished Altman with exclusion and contempt. The critics flayed him with accusations of misanthropy. After the failure of *Popeye*, Altman corrected himself by strapping on the corset of theatre adaptations (*Fool for Love*, *Beyond Therapy*). With a tight-faced Grisham plot, he has swapped a corset for a straitjacket.

It does not sprawl or wander as the Altman of old would have. Neither does it ever really catch alight. This is a waterlogged venture in more ways than one.

Odd fragments remind you that here we have a great director marking time. When Altman's camera lingers on the masks at a quayside fair; when he dwells on a pair of giggling floozies in a bar; when Duvall's buddies spring him from an asylum in a weird nocturnal dance of silver

and purple tints – then we glimpse the fugitive ghost of another less formulaic sort of film.

What sort of film, exactly? When it came to sharing out the Savannah scripts, someone clearly blundered. Clint made a clumsy, cliché-ridden fist of *Midnight in the Garden* – yet John Berendt's rambling mosaic of a book cried out for Altman's fluid touch.

Conversely, Eastwood and Grisham could have formed a square-jawed partnership without tormenting us with might-have-beens. So the studios handed out the wrong jobs to the wrong people.

Now there's one plot that never twists, come rain or shine. Ryan Gilbey returns next week

"An extraordinarily assured and imaginative film... A MASTERPIECE"
Geoff Andrew - TIME OUT

★★★★★
"GENIUS"
Ben Thompson - GO

"BRILLIANT"
Derek Malcolm - THE GUARDIAN

★★★★★
"An EPIC film disguised as a thriller"
Chris Roberts - UNCUT

★★★★★
"WONDERFULLY INVENTIVE"
Gareth Grundy - NEON



HANA-BI (18) ■ THE DAYTRIPPERS (15) ■ THE CASTLE (15) ■ PAULIE (U)
■ THE MAGIC SWORD: QUEST FOR CAMELOT (U) ■ DANCE TO THE WIND (U)

ALSO SHOWING

The imperfect crime

IN JAPAN, Takeshi Kitano is best known as a TV personality and stand-up comedian, but you would never guess it from watching one of his films. As an actor, he rarely speaks, or even moves his face.

The same minimalist approach extends to his direction: he shoots his characters square on, seldom moves the camera, and leaves much of the action off-screen, evoked with a splash of blood or the crunch of a china vase. He is the Raymond Carver of the Japanese crime movie.

In *Hana-Bi*, which won the Golden Lion at Venice last year, Kitano plays Nishi, a policeman whose wife is dying of leukaemia. When Nishi ducks out of a stakeout to visit her in hospital, his partner is shot and crippled while covering for him. To care for them both, Nishi resorts to borrowing from the yakuza, then to bank robbery. With the proceeds, he takes his wife on a final holiday, but his past soon catches up with him.

The plot might sound formulaic, but Kitano's touch is so sure that any melodrama seems to have been distilled out of the film. Like the shy smile which flickers on his battered, lop-sided, endlessly watchable face, moments of tenderness and poetry break through the fatalistic cool. For all the violence, it is an astonishingly quiet and delicate work from a film-maker in

complete control of his medium. *The Daytrippers* is a very indie comedy which marks the writing and directing debut of Greg Mottola. Suspecting that her publisher husband (Stanley Tucci) may be cheating on her, Eliza (Hope Davis) decides to go to Manhattan to track him down. But her family – silent dad, interfering mum, fussy sister (Parker Posey) and pretentious boyfriend (Liev Schreiber) – insist on driving her there in a Buick station wagon.

Shooting on a shoestring largely in the back of the car, Mottola makes the most of the limitations: "That was the world's shortest car chase," quips Posey when Dad insists on stopping on amber so letting their quarry escape. But it is as a writer that he really shines, gradually sketching in the sadness beneath the family squabbles. The cast respond with winning performances, not least a suave cameo from Campbell Scott as an amorous New York novelist.

For a more affectionate, but equally acute, look at family life, try *The Castle*, the tale of an

Australian family's legal battle to save their beloved clapboard bungalow from demolition when the neighbouring airport expands. With their bad hair, DIY obsession and pet greyhounds, the Kerriganis are not much more than working-class caricatures. But where the director, Rob Sitch, and his co-writers excel is in capturing the rhythms of family chat, the way catchphrases ("I'm only stating the truth") and achingly dull exchanges become surreally hil-

arious when they are repeated enough. With its narration from Dale (Stephen Curry), the dim but optimistic youngest son, this is a deadpan treat.

Even kids may roll their eyes at the idea of a talking parrot voiced by *Saturday Night Live's* Jay Mohr. But in the hands of the first-time writer Laurie Craig, the British director John Roberts and an upmarket cast, *Paulie* is a charming surprise.

Discovered in the basement

of a sinister animal research institute, *Paulie* the parrot recounts his picturesque cross-country adventures to a sympathetic janitor, the down-and-out Russian immigrant Mishka (Tony Shalhoub). The revelation that Mishka was a literature professor in the old country hints that we're in for something more than anthropomorphic farce and, against all expectations, *Paulie's* quest to be reunited with the stuttering little girl he once helped to speak proves to be a wistful tale of loss and the importance of speaking up for yourself.

An Arthurian adventure at Kayley, a knight's daughter who tracks down Excalibur to earn her place at the Round Table, *The Magic Sword: Quest for Camelot* is the first full-length product of Warner Bros' new animation division. It looks and sounds cheerier than the worst of Disney, but there is an edge of genuine weirdness that will keep adults entertained – or just perplexed.

In *Rajin Khan's* *Dance to the Wind*, Indian TV star Kitu Gidwani plays Pallavi, a singer of Hindustani classical music who dies up on stage following her mother's death. The ethereal music and stately camerawork help build a hypnotic atmosphere as Pallavi tries to come to terms with her bereavement. But even at 85 minutes, this feels like a short film dragged out beyond its natural length.

JOHN WRATHALL

ART, SEX AND DEATH

Things you need in an artist biopic: the artist must slash the canvas, paint his face, seduce the model and be emotionally inadequate

— THE THURSDAY REVIEW, PAGE 12 →

WIN Tickets to The Daytrippers Plus a free meal deal



Metrodome and Ed's Easy Diner, 'the best diner in town' are giving readers the opportunity to win one of 15 pairs of tickets to the film and a free meal deal to the value of £15.00. Released nation-wide on 24 July and starring a top notch cast of Parker Posey, Hope Davis, Liev Schreiber, Stanley Tucci and Campbell Scott, this film by first time director Greg Mottola is set to be this year's indie hit. This is an intimate and humorous look at one deeply dysfunctional family's misguided roadtrip, which develops into a harebrained adventure.

To win your own evening trip out, simply answer the following question:
Q: Much of the action in *The Daytrippers* is set against the backdrop of downtown Manhattan, which other film-maker is particularly linked to the 'Big Apple'?
a. Steven Spielberg b. Woody Allen c. Danny Boyle

METRODOME
ED'S
EASY DINER

Send your answers, plus name and address to: The Daytrippers/Ed's Diner competition, Metrodome Distribution, 25 Maddox Street, London W1R 9LE. Metrodome Distribution's decision is final and correspondence will be entered into. Entries must be in by 21 August 1998.

الليلة من الارض

THE THURSDAY REVIEW
The Independent 25 July 1998

RUSHES

WIKI HIGGINS

STANLEY KUBRICK is breaking
up his New York empire this
month with the sale of his
entire collection of film rights
to the World's End
for £10 million. Kubrick
had agreed to let funds in
from Hollywood to finance
the new version of *Empire of the
Sun*, which he is writing
with screenwriter Steven Zaillian.
Kubrick has been working
on the script himself.

JENNY MCNAUL: Jenny Mc-
Naul has joined the
cast of *Hollywoodland*
in next month's
magazine. She is
engaged to
writer/director
Peter Berg. The actress
will play up to a female
version of the
girlfriend she
had in her
last film, *Runaway Bride*.

JOHN GOODMAN: John Goodman
has signed on to play
the lead role in the
new TV series *Ed*. The
show, which will air
on NBC in September,
is based on the 1996
film of the same name
starring Goodman
as a man who
has lost his job
and wife. He
will be joined by
actress Jennifer
Tilly and actor
John Goodman's
son, Ethan.

DIE ENSEMBLE
YOU'LL SEE ALL YEAR
THE GUARDIAN
INTELLIGENT
EFFORTS
PERS

THE DEAD
ACADEMY
THE DEAD
ACADEMY

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STELLA
ARTOIS
SCREEN

FAST TRACK

GRADUATING TO THE WORLD OF WORK

Beat the boys at their own game

Women find Shoot-'em-ups boring - so they are designing their own games.
By Rachelle Thackray

THERE ARE two children in a room, sitting at a computer. One, a 10-year-old boy, is intent on the screen, jabbing furiously at the keyboard to exterminate the aliens in front of him. The other, a girl of 11, twirls her hair around her finger, watching sideways, idly distracted by the on-screen destruction, but in fact itching to get out and find something more mentally stimulating to do.

While there are exceptions to the rule, this scenario is one to which the male-dominated computer games industry has become largely resigned. For years, it has targeted a "narrow but deep" market consisting mainly of boys, teenage and younger, who will, on average, buy 12 to 18 games a year. The girls are interested - as passive observers on the whole - but to turn them into active purchasers the industry is having to attract a new breed of computer game designer: women.

Kim Whitmore, a former Atari designer, set up her own interactive design company Xebec. In the early Nineties with two men. She was never a fan of "shoot-'em-ups", but enjoyed games with more of an intellectual content, and while at Atari she worked on a game called Gossip, "a storytelling concept". At Xebec, she masterminds the production of tailored interactive learning packages that companies use to train their staff in specific areas.

She believes there is certainly scope for games that appeal to women, but says the industry itself needs more women at its hub.

A master's degree in physics from Imperial College, London, was a good start for her. "My degree helped substantially in terms of building structures and getting people to ask questions. When you're doing interactive design for training purposes, you have to try to provide facilitation, and you've got to understand how to break systems down and pull them together in a clear and precise way."

She gives some credence to theories that women are less



Women like games where you can 'make choices about people's lives', says Sandra Daniels, above, who has designed her own supermodel game Russell Sach

oriented towards 3-D games design because of their biological make-up. "I watched a television programme that claimed women are good verbally but find it difficult to hold spatial relationships in their head. I have certainly found that's true. It's more difficult for me to [hold 3-D images in my head] than to do a training simulation when I have a specific goal. There is something verbal about training, because you are translating information."

Another woman who set up her own games design company, Lesley Keen, has other theories about why the percentage of women in the gaming industry is still low. "I'm not a programmer; although I've been a research fellow of Glasgow University's computer science department

for years, I'm at a conceptual level rather than actually making it happen," says Ms Keen, who was formerly a film-maker. "People ask me to give talks to schoolgirls to get more women into computing, and certainly there is a different approach to technology for a girl of 12 than for a woman of 35. But some will argue that it's not the kind of life a girl wants to lead, working 24 hours a day in a darkened room, ankle-deep in pizza boxes. Maybe it's a social or a cultural thing. One idea is that boys are programmed to be more competitive than girls, and play against each other, while girls play collaboratively."

She admits that although Internet developments will mean a breakthrough for the types of games her

company, Inner Workings, produces, it certainly will not be a doodle to corner the female market. She has, she says, noticed that women are more drawn by games such as the American best-selling *Myst*, which involve an in-depth story and emotional links between characters. "I don't know what it would take to make an addictive application for women. It may be that they just don't see recreation in the same way. I quite enjoy a good shoot-'em-up myself, and there are lots of women at Inner Workings, but it's the guys who stay on late at night to play Quake over the network."

The recent Games Developer UK 98 competition - where entrants from outside the industry were asked to come up with new game

concepts - exposed the lack of female interest in the sphere. Less than 5 per cent of entries came from women. One entrant was Sandra Daniels, 37, who runs a rest home in Bognor Regis. She became interested in computer games after watching her two sons play. Her ideas include a "supermodel" game, and she prefers those that have an element of puzzle and progression.

"There's definitely a market gap, and nothing is really marketed at women; I pick up these magazines and they are all for men and boys. I like really simple games, like *Tetris*, where you can progress up the levels, but not something you have to work out for ages. *Tomb Raider*, for instance, is supposed to be the number one game, but I can't even work

out how to make the girl move."

While there are some products on the shelves that are targeted at young female players - a SpiceWorld game, for instance - Ms Daniels has noticed a dearth of games for anyone over 30. "You need something with role models, something where you could see someone succeeding, where you can make some choices about people's lives. Something where they progress, rather than just running an alien spaceship."

There is even a market for the aged female consumer, she says. "I've plugged in the Megadrive with Sonic the Hedgehog at my rest home, and at first they were a little bit fazed by it, but it's something they could do; they haven't got to use a lot of strength, and it's simple."



'Myst' is one of the most successful story games

According to others in the industry, Wallace & Gromit and the game *Myst* - created by Rand and Robyn Miller, and a bestseller in the United States - is one of a new breed of story games which both girls and women enjoy playing.

The game, which in its saga structure recalls C S Lewis's *Chronicles of Narnia*, features video of real actors (including the game's creators), minutely-detailed scenery and objects, and a mythical storyline which presents the player with a choice at each stage of the game. Its successor, also by the Miller team, is called *Riven*.

The NOP research found that other games with appeal to girls include *Tomb Raider II* and *Worms II*, although even these games are played by twice as many boys as girls. More than 70 per cent of the sample of children were found to have played a videogame in the week before the research was conducted.

A-Z OF EMPLOYERS

HEWLETT-PACKARD



Age: 37 in the UK, 59 in the US.
History: Dave Packard and Bill Hewlett founded more than just a company when they set up shop in their garage in Palo Alto, California, in 1939 (now christened "the Birthplace of Silicon Valley"); they founded one of the first corporate cultures. HP opened its first UK site in 1961, and produced the world's first desktop scientific computer in 1968.

Starting out in testing and measurement, HP has become one of the world's biggest computer companies. Although in 1994 *The Wall Street Journal* described it as "a torpid dinosaur among fleet-footed little predators", HP was recently listed as the world's fastest-growing PC company with success partly attributed to a reduction in cycle time. In 1992, HP moved into client-server networks and by 1995 it had a third of the market in inkjet printers. It also has businesses in components, medical, analytical, support and consultancy.

Address: Headquarters are at Amersham Corner in Cain Road, Bracknell. A third of the company's research goes on in a new £30m laboratory set-up in Bristol (including Brims, Basic Research into Mathematical Sciences), and there is a large telecoms site in Edinburgh, plus a components site in Ipswich.

Ambience: Reputedly, a friendly, open-door company with a structured culture. Staff are kept accountable by means of set objectives incorporating performance evaluation. An informal first-name culture has

physics, chemistry, materials science or finance. There is no limit on graduate places, and many applicants have spent time with the company during a sandwich course.

Glimmering alumna: Both the company chairman and director of laboratories have been awarded OBEs and sit on various CBI, government and industry committees.

Fair: All employees are paid a proportional production bonus, and in 1995 a record £135m was paid to staff in profit-related bonuses. The scheme pays out twice a year: since 1982, workers with more than six months' service have received an average of 6.75 per cent of earnings through it. Pay is also performance-related.

Training: Graduates attend a standard induction course, but there is little in the way of graduate training. The responsibility for long-term training within the company lies with an individual, in consultation with managers.

Facilities: Restaurant facilities are apparently "first-class" on all sites. Many sites also have sports facilities - such as a jogging track, football field, tennis and squash courts, and a gym - as well as shops and cash points, and there is a staff discount scheme.

Who's the boss? John Golding is chairman and managing director in the UK; Dr John Taylor is director of HP Laboratories. The big boss is Lew Platt, who has been with HP since the Sixties; he is chairman, president and CEO of HP worldwide.

Easy to get into? Only those with 2.1 degrees or above need apply. Applicants will need to have studied electronics or mechanical engineering, computer sciences, manufacturing systems,

RACHELLE THACKRAY

Converted to inner city living

CV

TOM BLOXHAM IS THE MILLIONAIRE CHAIRMAN OF PROPERTY DEVELOPERS URBAN SPLASH



'Maverick to mainstream'

TOM BLOXHAM, 34, is chairman of the North-west property developers Urban Splash. He became a millionaire by reclaiming old city centre buildings and converting them into trendy loft apartments or "mixed spaces" for businesses. But his first entrepreneurial steps were in selling second-hand records at market stalls. He was declared this year's UK Entrepreneur of the Year.

Growing up, I was open-minded about what I wanted to do. At first I quite fancied being an architect but eventually I thought it was too much like hard work. I was born in a village in Hampshire but lived there for only a very short period of time. My dad was a captain in the Army so we moved around a lot, and I lived in Germany for a while. I had 13 different schools by the time I was 11. My first proper job was as a porter in a department store in London. Before university I had a year out and spent some time selling fire extinguishers.

At 19, I went to Manchester University to study politics and modern history. I was quite interested in politics as a kid, and had the unenviable task of being chairman of the Labour Party Young Socialists when I lived in Surbiton, in Surrey. But after studying politics for three years I learnt that no matter how you vote, the Government always gets in. To be honest, I got totally disillusioned with politics before I went to college. There I got a 2:2, which is a good gentleman's degree - I did my vision in Goa in India.

During college, I started selling second-hand records at student unions and market stalls - my parents were living in London and I set up stalls at Camden Town and Portobello Road.

Then I started to sell posters as a sideline and this became more

profitable than the records. At that stage, I was just trying to pay for my beers. I've never really had a vision; it's all been haphazard.

After university I decided to stay in Manchester, because I liked it and the poster-selling was starting to develop into a retail business. In the beginning, I couldn't find suitable premises; many landlords were not interested in dealing with unproven businesses. And I realised other people were in the same position. So in 1987 I bought Affleck's Arcade in Manchester's Oldham Street and sublet the surplus space. Many of those who took up the spaces were people I knew from college. The first tenants included designer clothes shops, record shops, body-piercers, and a condom shop - there were all sorts of wonderful things.

In 1989 we thought, "This is a good idea," and decided to set up a similar venture at the Liverpool Palace. There, I also became involved in developing and running a bar called Baa Baa. We also set up a managed workspace for James Barton, who went on to run Liverpool's Cream nightclub. Following that, we developed a similar workspace for the music industry at Ducie House in Manchester.

The basis for Urban Splash was good contemporary design and finding uses for redundant buildings. We realised people were not just interested in homes with gold bath taps. We were motivated by trying to create places where we would want to live. There was a gap in the market because even now most new houses that are built are two-storey Edwardian pastiches at the edge of a town. Urban Splash has been successful because we saw the potential of buildings which no one was prepared to take on in parts of the city that had been virtually written off. Obviously, we operate to make a profit but we are providing homes

which are not using up green-field sites. Also, in the places we have developed crime levels have fallen, because populating areas stops crime.

When we started out we were seen as maverick and crazy, but now it is very much a mainstream policy. I think there is a realisation that the future is in the cities. John Prescott came to visit us last week and have a look around. And now we are often approached by local authorities looking for solutions to their building problems.

Things have improved over the last year with regard to VAT incentives for developing brown-field sites. If you develop a non-residential building into apartments, you now get the VAT back, which has been a dramatic help.

We are currently involved in more than a million square feet of developments, but the stock of buildings is diminishing as everyone jumps on the bandwagon. We are now looking at developing some new buildings. It's a new challenge for us - we are hoping to help revolutionise the way people live. In the Sixties and Seventies firms such as Ikea and Habitat revolutionised furniture; before it had all been mock period pieces. Why can't we have a housing revolution?

The advice I would give to people interested in an entrepreneurial career is to do it early. It is best to start when you have nothing to lose. I was very lucky to start at 18 or 19 when I didn't have anything. Later on in life, you start getting mortgages and commitments. The other thing is to concentrate and have complete confidence in yourself. I went through some dark times, but you've just got to believe that you're going to get through those.

INTERVIEW BY
MARK OLIVER



HOME OFFICE

TRAINEE PROBATION OFFICER POSTS

New arrangements for the recruitment and training of Probation Officers have now been developed and probation services are ready to begin their selection process to fill trainee vacancies.

Successful applicants will be expected to undertake a Diploma in Probation Studies while working as trainees. The Diploma will comprise a degree and NVQ in Community Justice, and should take about two years to complete, depending on previous experience and qualifications.

Trainee salaries will be in the range of £11,778-£12,504 with inner/outer London weighting if appropriate. On achievement of the Diploma, trainees will be eligible for appointment as probation officers subject to vacancies (current salary scale £17,022-£22,956 plus London weighting).

Trainees will be appointed from 1st October 1998 onwards and applicants must be aged at least 20 years at this time. The educational qualifications sought for entry to the scheme are as follows:

Candidates under 21- a minimum of 2 passes at A level and 3 GCSE or 3 at A level and 1 at GCSE.

Candidates over 21 but under 25- generally 5 passes at GCSE.

Candidates over 25- acceptance without formal qualifications is possible subject to written assessment.

However, each Consortium may have slightly different requirements.

Probation work is complex and demanding and high quality recruits from a wide range of backgrounds are sought. Experience of working with offenders would be helpful but is not essential. Experience of dealing with other people who are socially or personally disadvantaged may be equally relevant. It is important that candidates understand the work of the probation service, its role within the criminal justice sector and the demanding nature of the work.

For the purposes of selection and training, the probation services have combined into nine separate Consortium areas. For further details and an application form, please send a 12" by 9" (A4) addressed envelope with £1 postage to the Consortium area in which you wish to apply. The London Consortium is accepting telephone applications only and applicants should use the number given below. The closing dates for return of the completed forms range from 7th-28th August. Candidates must check the exact date specified by each Consortium.

CONSORTIUM AREA

London (inner, Southeast, South West, Northeast, Middlesex)

North of Thames (Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Suffolk, Bedfordshire)

Southeast (Berkshire, Hampshire, Kent, Oxford and Buckinghamshire, Surrey, East Sussex, West Sussex)

ADDRESS

Tel: 0171 233 2024

Herts Probation Service

Lashoe House,

Dorset)

County Hall,

Hertford SG1 8EH

S.E. Region Probation

Consortium

C/O Guildford Probation Centre

College House, Woodbridge Rd,

Guildford, Surrey GU1 4RS

CONSORTIUM AREA

Southwest (Avon, Cornwall, Devon, Gloucestershire, Somerset, Wiltshire, Dorset)

Wales (Dyfed, Mid Glamorgan, South Glamorgan, West Glamorgan, Gwent, Powys, North Wales)

Midlands (Derbyshire, Hereford and Worcester, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, West Midlands)

Midlands Training and Assessment Consortium

C/O West Midlands Probation Service

1 Victoria Square, Birmingham B1 1BD

ADDRESS

Dorset Probation Service

Court Building, Worle Rd,

Wareham BH20 6BE

Brackla House, Brackla Street,

Bridgend CF31 1BZ

Yorks and Humberside

(Humberside, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, North Yorkshire)

1 Victoria Square, Birmingham B1 1BD

CONSORTIUM AREA

Northeast (Durham, Northumbria, Teesside)

Teesside Probation Service

2nd Floor, Prudential House,

31/33 Albert Rd,

Middlesbrough TS1 1PE

Probation Northwest Consortium

1c Derby Lane, Old Swan,

Liverpool L15 8QA

Humberseide Probation Service

Groveside, 1 Albany Rd, Barrow,

North Humberseide

DN14 6XA

ADDRESS

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Education Officer

Earth Kind is an animal welfare and environmental charity seeking to appoint an Education Officer to develop our educational resources and Earth Kind's ship based Ocean Defenders Project.

Applicants must have a Marine/Biological Sciences degree, an understanding of marine issues and either an educational qualification or at least two years broad based educational experience. Knowledge of current marine conservation issues and an ability to communicate with children, volunteers and the public is essential. Responsible to the Chief Executive and working as part of the Earth Kind team respondents must be computer literate and have a clean driving licence. A one year contract, with a six month probation period is offered.

Salary: c. £15,000 p.a.

For an application form, please contact: Gill Bell, Earth Kind, Avenue Lodge, Bounds Green Road, London N22 7EL.

Closing date: Monday 17th August 1998.

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Based at our head office in Rochdale, the successful applicant will maintain and develop existing accounts, and generate new business. This position will involve European travel.

An enthusiastic, outgoing personality with good communication and organisational skills would be ideal for this position. Applicants must have previous sales experience, preferably in a similar role.

Please apply in writing, enclosing CV and Details of salary expectations to:

Jacqueline Thackeray, Sales Office Manager, Roch Valley Ltd, Stoneyfield, Boundary Street, Rochdale, Gt Manchester OL11 3TO

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South West Trains Limited
Ground Floor, Wessex House
231-232 Blackfriars Road
London SE1 9NW

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Epsilon... the company

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Epsilon... the technology

Our software products are developed using Microsoft Visual C++ for use in business-critical solutions on Windows NT and Windows CE platforms. We apply structured development techniques to our object-oriented software design and development.

Epsilon... the positions

We are looking to recruit Senior Analyst/Programmers and Analyst/Programmers. If you are a graduate with a minimum of 12 months software development experience, we would like to hear from you. Knowledge of C and C++ is preferred, though not essential as cross-training will be provided for suitable candidates. Recent graduates with relevant degrees may apply as we also have vacancies at this level.

Epsilon... the offer

Excellent salaries will be offered to high calibre candidates who wish to join us at our city centre offices in Peterborough. Individuals who are able to demonstrate an aptitude for management will be rapidly promoted into project team leadership roles. The benefits of joining this progressive company at this formative stage are evident.

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If you are a software development professional who is interested in joining Epsilon then please send your cv with a letter, quoting reference IP0798 to Epsilon Technology Solutions Limited, First Floor Suite, Peterscourt, City Road, Peterborough PE1 1SA.



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September 1998. For more
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NEW FILMS

THE THIEF (15)

Director: Pavel Chukhrai
Starring: Misha Philipchuk, Vladimir Mashkov
The Thief is a familiar story, told with competence, but it's only the passionate acting which makes the film special. In his investigation into the psyche of a six-year-old Russian boy in the aftermath of the Second World War, writer-director Pavel Chukhrai tries for that brand of unforced poetry pioneered by Louis Malle and by Tarkovsky. Unfortunately, he doesn't quite pull it off.

Chukhrai does too much of the work for his audience; his film is most striking when it rests on intuition, such as when it is building the relationship between the child, Sanya (Misha Philipchuk), and his mother's lover, Tolyan (Vladimir Mashkov), who wears a soldier's uniform but carries a kit-bag bulging with looted crockery and cutlery. It's the film's thief, and the suggestion is that he has filched more than just other people's goblets: he's stolen the heart of Kaya (Ekaterina Rednikova) and the innocence of her little boy, too.

Chukhrai lets the story unfold until the final 15 minutes, when it seems to go disastrously wrong. He tries to tie up the loose ends, but some of us like to have them flapping around in the memory. CW: Renoir

GODZILLA (PG)

Director: Roland Emmerich
Starring: Matthew Broderick, Jean Reno
New York is in turmoil. People are running through the streets screaming, and though the police are desperately trying to restore calm, even they are wondering if the Big Apple will ever recover. Yes, Tina Brown has left the building. Oh, and there's also a giant lizard rampaging through the streets, lunching on skyscrapers. But never mind all that: what next for Tina?

The team of Roland Emmerich (director and co-writer) and Dean Devlin (producer and co-writer) are generally very adept at constructing enjoyable adventures with a B-movie taste for fun (*Starship Troopers* and *Independence Day*), but their touch evades them on *Godzilla*. The script tosses in characters and conflicts which aren't followed through, and

it doesn't take long for it all to descend from a nuclear age parable to a numb, dumb succession of chases.

It's hard to imagine who might get a kick out of *Godzilla*, except for New Yorkers who like to imagine their city starting again from scratch. CW: ABC Baker Street, ABC Tottenham Court Road, Clapham Picture House, Elephant & Castle Coronet, Empire Leicester Square, Hammersmith Virgin, Notting Hill Coronet, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Plaza, Rio Cinema, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Fulham Road

THE LITTLE MERMAID (U) Animated Feature
Director: John Musker and Ron Clements
Re-released for the summer holidays by Disney, this film provides an odd, unexpected treat. Bright and breezy in style, even its songs are good. CW: Clapham Picture House, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

BARNEY'S GREAT ADVENTURE (U)

Director: Steve Gomer
Starring: Barney the Dinosaur
Feature-length exploits for the big, jolly dinosaur whose blend of nursery rhymes, day-glo colours and moral lessons make him ideal for the pre-school viewer – but an endurance test for anyone else. CW: Hammersmith Virgin, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Trocadero

LIFE IS ALL YOU GET (18)

Director: Wolfgang Becker
Starring: Jürgen Vogel, Ricky Tomlinson
Beginning with a riot in Berlin and a man discovering he may be HIV positive, this film really takes you by surprise. In this gritty and absurd film, the drama is never diminished by the humour, and the comedy has real poignancy. CW: ABC Swiss Centre, Clapham Picture House, Curzon Minerva

Ryan Gilbey

GENERAL RELEASE

CITY OF ANGELS (12)

Nicolas Cage plays an angel deciding whether or not to exchange his celestial immortality for domestic bliss with the mortal Meg Ryan in the American take on Wim Wenders' *Wings of Desire*. West End: ABC Baker St, ABC Tottenham Court Rd, Barbican Screen, Clapham Picture House, Hammersmith Virgin, Notting Hill Coronet, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Haymarket, Warner Village West End

DREAM WITH THE FISHES (18)

Take a suicidal loser and a jumble with a mouth to live and give them some time together before an inevitable tearful farewell. Perhaps it's the realisation that *Dream with the Fishes* could so easily have been a nightmare that makes its success seem deserved. West End: Metro

GIRLS' NIGHT (15)

Tearjerker which stars Brenda Blethyn as a cancer-sufferer who jets off to Las Vegas for a last holiday with her sister-in-law, played by Julie Walters. Initially bubbly, the film becomes grossly manipulative. CW: UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Haymarket, Warner Village West End

THE GIRL WITH BRAINS IN HER FEET (15)

Jaunty take on the rites-of-passage genre. The lively script is complemented by the sparkling performance of Joanna Ward as the film's heroine. West End: Rio Cinema

GREASE (20TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION) (PG)
What fun there can be had from a second viewing of this 20 year old nostalgia film is mostly due to John Travolta's manic performance as the greased up hero. CW: Clapham Picture House, Empire Leicester Square, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Marble Arch, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero

GURU IN SEVEN (18)

A thoroughly dismal, witless British comedy which comes on like an Asian version of the Sixties classic, *Alfie*. CW: ABC Piccadilly, Virgin Trocadero

KISS OR KILL (18)

Australian road movie come serial killer drama about a couple of scam merchants. Pretentious in some places, it still manages to be agreeably nasty in others. CW: ABC Shaftesbury Avenue, Odeon Camden Town

KURT & COURTNEY (15)

Compulsive documentary, directed by Nick Broomfield, investigating the death of the Nirvana frontman, Kurt Cobain. CW: Ritzy Cinema, Screen on the Green, Warner Village West End

THE LAST TIME I COMMITTED SUICIDE (15)
A dip into the life of the Beat icon Neal Cassady, played by Thomas Jane. West End: ABC Piccadilly

MOJO (15)

Set in a mythologised 1950s Soho inhabited by petty gangsters, *Mojo* never entirely escapes its theatrical roots. But it concentrates on sexual tension in a way which American crime movies generally shy away from. CW: Plaza, Warner Village West End

THE OBJECT OF MY AFFECTION (15)

Romantic comedy in which Paul Rudd confounds his flatmate Jennifer Aniston's dreams of a wedding and joint burial plot by turning out to be gay. CW: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Odeon West End, Phoenix Cinema, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on Baker Street, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea

PALMETTO (15)

Ironic film noir directed by Volker Schlöndorff. Harry Barber (Woody Harrelson) is the ex-con who gets mixed up with a pair of duplicitous women. CW: UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Haymarket, Warner Village West End

PONETTE (15)

French tale of a four-year-old girl (Viviane Thivisol) whose mother dies in a car accident. The young Thivisol is superb, yet it's hard to deny discomfort at watching one so young parade emotion, this raw and primal. CW: Curzon Mayfair, Metro

SAVIOR (18)

Politically inept war film set in Bosnia. Dennis Quaid stars as a man who loses his family in a Paris bomb blast and avenges their deaths by gunning down a row of Muslims at prayer before becoming a hired killer. West End: Virgin Haymarket

SIX DAYS, SEVEN NIGHTS (12)

Implausibly contrived romantic comedy in which Harrison Ford plays a boozey pilot who crash-lands with a New York magazine editor (Anne Heche) on a remote island. CW: Barbican Screen, Elephant & Castle Coronet, Hammersmith Virgin, Notting Hill Coronet, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Odeon West End, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea

SLING BLADE (15)

Intelligent and unsettling drama starring writer-director Billy Bob Thornton as a mentally disabled man who is released into the outside world after spending his life in an institution. CW: Barbican Screen, Clapham Picture House, Odeon Camden Town, Ritzy Cinema, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero

STIFF UPPER LIPS (15)

Spot of the Merchant/Ivory movies from one of the talents responsible for *Leon the Pig Farmer*. West End: Plaza, Virgin Chelsea

THE TASTE OF CHERRY (PG)

The joint winner of last year's Palme d'Or has taken a year to get a release over here, but thanks to highly naturalistic performances, it's a hypnotic and moving experience. West End: Renoir

TOUCH (15)

Paul Schrader's adaptation of Elmore Leonard's novel turns a breezy satire into a rather heavy-handed investigation into religious conviction. CW: Plaza

THE WAR AT HOME (15)

Tale of a traumatised Vietnam veteran on his return home to Texas adapted from James Duff's Broadway play, *Homefront*. CW: Plaza

THE WEDDING SINGER (12)

Dumb but winning comedy about a wedding singer who falls for a waitress (Drew Barrymore), only to find that she's engaged to someone else. CW: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Marble Arch, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

MIMIC (15)
Mira Sorvino is a doctor who combats a virus that's sweeping New York by developing a rival cockroach species in this ingenious science-fiction horror fable. CW: Elephant & Castle Coronet, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Marble Arch, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

LOVE AND DEATH ON LONG ISLAND (15)
See *The Independent Recommends*, above. CW: Barbican Screen, Chelsea Cinema, Clapham Picture House, Gate Notting Hill, Metro, Renoir, Richmond Filmhouse, Rio Cinema, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on Baker Street, Screen on the Hill, Virgin Haymarket

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